

Sight and Sound

Queer cinema

The films, the directors
and the debates
Plus Neil Bartlett's
obsession: Errol Flynn

After 'Hardware': on the set of
Richard Stanley's 'Dust Devil'
Funerals in Berlin: from Marlene
Dietrich to Syberberg's 'Hitler'
Quality time: Jonathan Powell
on the future of BBC1

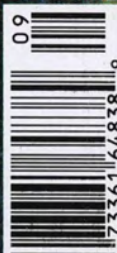
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Leos Carax's
'Les Amants du
Pont Neuf'

Crazy for Paris

Shot by shot analysis and
production history plus
Carax in interview

Juliette Binoche in 'Les Amants du Pont Neuf'



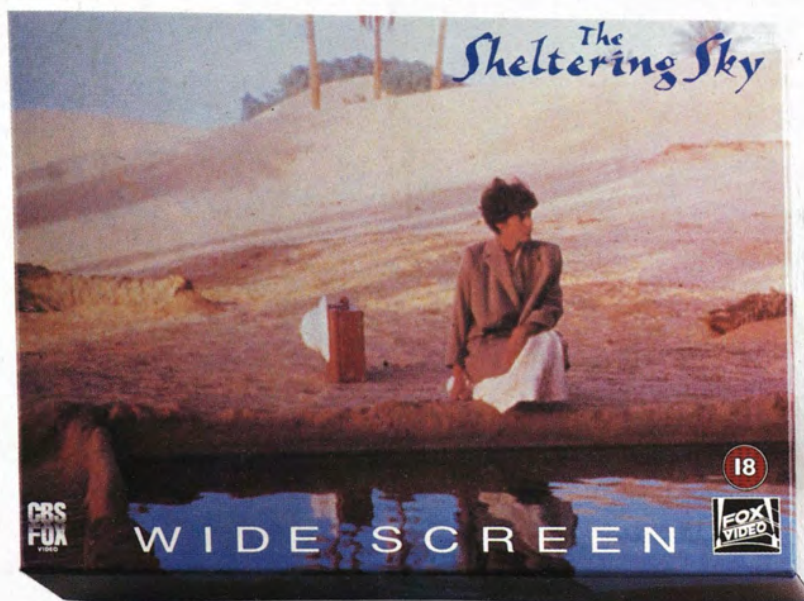
OUR PRICE

music



BLUE VELVET David Lynch's penchant for revealing small town America's sinister underbelly (a theme he revisits in "Twin Peaks") first became apparent in this cult classic.

Inquisitive college student Jeffrey (Kyle MacLachlan) becomes inveigled in a dark, sensuous mystery. Isabella Rossellini, Laura Dern and Dennis Hopper also star in this disturbing, realistic film.



THE SHELTERING SKY Bernardo Bertolucci's epic desert tale stars John Malkovich and Debra Winger as a sophisticated American couple finding it difficult to live with each other. Their North African sortie is designed to bring them closer together, but as they penetrate further into the desert, the sun, sand and rocks of an unrelenting landscape gradually destroys them.

Both of these videos are special wide screen presentations that arrive in box sets and include collectors edition booklets.

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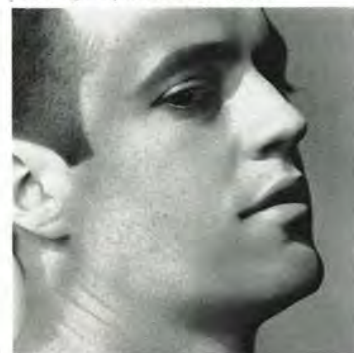
Sight and Sound



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After the fall

Contributors to this issue

Michael Eaton's scriptwriting credits include *Shoot to Kill*

Professor Thomas Elsaesser's many publications include the award-winning *Early German Cinema*

Lizzie Francke is writing a book on women screenwriters

Professor Marjorie Garber teaches at Harvard University. Her latest book, on cross-dressing, is *Vested Interests*

Julian Graffy teaches Russian at SSEES, University of London

John Harkness is film critic of *Now*, the Toronto magazine

Professor Gertrud Koch teaches film at the University of Bochum. Her latest book is on Judaism and visual representations

Mark Kermode is writing a book on *The Exorcist*

Angela McRobbie has written extensively on theory and popular culture

David Thompson, co-editor of *Scorsese on Scorsese*, is completing a television film on Michael Powell

Ginette Vincendeau teaches film at the University of Warwick and has published extensively on French cinema

Professor Brian Winston

is writing a book on the history and practice of documentary

Ben Woolley's new book on Virtual Reality is published by Basil Blackwell

Everyone born into the post-1945 world knew that culture was good for them. Institutions as various as schools, the Arts Council, the BBC, the quality press, the BFI, told us so, proclaiming that the arts addressed our better selves. Lord Goodman could even say in the 60s that the arts had the power to transform ruffians into citizens.

As everyone also knows, the post-war settlement has been unravelling over the last few years, throwing so much of our common sense in doubt, and not least the arguments around culture. In the 80s, and particularly towards the close of the decade, there was a rush towards populism in cultural matters – whatever is popular is good; there is no other criterion – which put many cultural authorities and institutions on the defensive. There are no signs that the populist pressures are letting up, and everyone seems to be invited to rush to one or other side of the barricade, either shoring up 'how things used to be' or embracing the new world where the people ought to be given what they want. But before we reflect on how the conflict is finding expression in Britain, it is worth reminding ourselves that other countries too are undergoing a crisis of cultural authority.

In an even more spectacular fashion than in Britain, the post-war settlement in Germany has collapsed, and the cultural fall-out has been heavy, not only on institutions and critics, but on practitioners. As Thomas Elsaesser's article in this issue shows, now that German film-makers such as Wenders and Syberberg are no longer recognised, post unification, as their country's authentic conscience, they are deprived of a role and can even sometimes be dismissed as "harmless nutcases".

But the crisis extends to stranger places – even to Hollywood (which some consider the home of brutal populism), where it is evident that auteurs are feeling themselves vulnerable to new pressures. Now that everyone possesses home-movie equipment, and everyone is a potential auteur, the individuality and 'specialness' of 'real' film-makers is threatened. This finds expression in movies such as *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*, *sex, lies and videotape*, and *The Adjuster*, where a new villain has appeared, the democratising technology of the video camera or Super 8 operated by a cold, malevolent being

who is the implicit rival to the film's true auteur.

In comparison with Germany or the US, Britain's crisis of cultural authority is less dramatic. We do things differently here, after all. A rather modest example of the crisis is the rumbling row at *The Guardian*, where a new arts editor and contributors are making a sustained populist assault ('Hollywood exciting, everything else boring') on some of the established pieties of the newspaper's cinema coverage. A more important example is Channel 4, whose entry into the marketplace necessarily involves, according to the pessimists, a rejection of its original brief as cultural authority and a traitorous embrace of populism. But the most important touchstone, as ever in Britain, is the BBC.

The internal outcry over *Eldorado*, for instance, seems part of a strategy that says the BBC should abandon the popular and take to the high ground, producing a number of authoritative series in order to regain its role as cultural guardian, which it temporarily abandoned in the 80s. How else are we to understand the manic search among producers to find programmes for the 90s equivalent to Kenneth Clark's *Civilisation* or Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man*? With this new BBC orthodoxy, it is brave of Jonathan Powell, who is in a very exposed position, to insist that there is potential value in the popular while, at the same time, carefully distancing himself from the cruder populist positions.

In these circumstances, and not only in relation to the BBC's output, our only wisdom may be to refuse to jump into bed with either side in these debates, and to make judgments and take up positions in a much more *ad hoc* way. As has been argued here before, it is foolish to sneer automatically at the currently popular, simply because of its popularity, when so much we now value from the past was at the time of its production judged as merely commercial. But it is equally wrongheaded to dismiss art-house work simply because it cannot in the short run command widespread support.

If there are to be grounds for new authoritative cultural judgments, about film or anything else, they will lie beyond the oppositions of culture and commerce, high and low, popular and elite. The only problem is how we get there.

JERRY ON LINE #1

James Sillavan – Peter Lydon ©



'Jerry, I'm worried, you promised me you'd control Coppolessi, yet all I see in the rushes are master shots. You promised me lots of close-ups, lots of coverage, but all I see Jerry, are master shots. When we take this film away from him, how the hell are we gonna re-cut it?'

Hall of mirrors

John Harkness

Americans love movie stars and hate politicians. They loved Ronald Reagan because he was a movie star, not a politician. He didn't answer questions with fact and policy and statistics, but made things up and told stories and bobbed his head as if he were about to say "shucks ma'am" like Gary Cooper. Or, oddly, like Tom Cruise.

On the other hand, they rejected Democratic hopeful Paul Tsongas not because of his political views – I doubt that one American in fifty could describe his economic policies – but because of his unfortunate sonic resemblance to the wrong movie star. As stand-up comics all over the US were too fond of pointing out, he sounded just like Elmer Fudd.

Presidential campaigns are festivals for students of cultural imagery. If Reagan was the lone horseman of a hundred mediocre Westerns, Bush is the sort of thin-lipped, no-fun guy who turns down loan applications in Frank Capra movies. Or, if we watched him at a conference about the alleged POWs still in south-east Asia telling a heckler to "Please sit down and shut up", he's a petty headmaster. Dan Quayle, on the other hand, resembles nothing so much as the rich frat scum James Spader used to play in Molly Ringwald movies (see *Pretty in Pink*, especially, but Spader played a lot of these characters in the years before *sex, lies and videotape*).

Bill Clinton has been compared to Elvis. He's southern, of course, and he's got the diffident head bob, but please, he bears about as much resemblance to Elvis as Jimmy Carter did. (And anyway, Carter claimed to like Bob Dylan and the Allman Brothers.) Clinton's problem is that his cinematic antecedents are muddled. He looks like the Redford character in *The Candidate*, a big, blonde-hair-and-teeth candidate who gets described as Kennedyesque because that's the adjective that gets tossed at big, blonde-hair-and-teeth candidates. Indeed, when the Clinton-Gore tour bus pulled off the highway so the candidates and their staff could toss a football around, the television news coverage inevitably created a flashback to grainy footage of touch football at the Kennedy compound at Hyannisport, back in the days when the Kennedy compound didn't mean Senator Ted Kennedy walking around without his pants and minor nephews getting arrested for rape.

The candidate this year who most resembled *The Candidate* was Jerry Brown – a flaky outsider with impeccable insider credentials whose platform became increasingly amorphous and incoherent under the sustained scrutiny of the media. Clinton is less Redford's *Candidate* than Alan Alda's Senator in *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*. Think about it for a second. He's a workaholic policy wonk with a professionally ambitious wife (Hillary Clinton is a lawyer; Barbara Harris was a child psychologist) and one daughter. He cheated on his wife, though the "smoking bimbo", Gennifer Flowers, was no Meryl Streep.

But what do we make of Ross Perot? Now



'Bob Roberts': Tim Robbins as the candidate who knows his way to people's hearts

you see him, now you don't, since he withdrew from a race he was never officially in on the night that Bill Clinton was anointed as the Democratic nominee. Did Tim Robbins anticipate Perot's arrival with his political mockumentary, *Bob Roberts*, a satiric portrait – some have called it the *This Is Spinal Tap* – of American politics in which a right-wing folk singer launches a populist campaign for Senator through talk shows and concert appearances?

Bob Roberts is astute and funny. Robbins has perceived and anticipated the way American audiences have shifted. Robbins understood – in the way Washington insiders have not – that the way to reach the American people is through the afternoon and late-night talk shows. When Democratic candidate Clinton appears on Arsenio Hall's chat show and plays saxophone with the band, or Jerry Brown offers listeners a free long-distance phone line to call in contributions to his campaign, Washington insiders treat these as strange aberrations that somehow pervert the political process. For his part, George Bush announced that he wouldn't be appearing on any of "those weird talk shows". One wonders if he knows that a lot more people watch Arsenio Hall or Phil Donahue than tune into *Washington Week in Review*.

Bill Clinton playing the sax on *The Arsenio Hall Show* is not so far removed from *Bob Roberts*, though his policies are. For that matter, the arrival of *Bob Roberts* at the Cannes Film Festival this year, with the eponymous politician denouncing the "crimes" of the 60s (free love, smoking dope, protesting against the war in Vietnam) came with its own eerie echo as George Bush identified the liberal social programmes of that much-maligned decade as the cause of the riots in Los Angeles.

Bob Roberts is a sharp and insightful film, but it doesn't anticipate Ross Perot. For that, we have to go back to 1974, to one of the masterpieces of American cinema. In the year of Robert Altman's triumphant return to the world cinema limelight, the outsider non-campaign of Ross Perot has added another laurel to the reputation of *Nashville*. For what is Ross Perot but the incarnation of Thomas Hal Phillips, the third-party candidate whose sound trucks roll through the

streets of Nashville exhorting Americans to get back to the old values?

American television news doesn't see any of this. They have consistently missed the point through the campaign. They don't get the references. To watch American network news programmes and such commentary programmes as *The McLaughlin Group*, *The Capitol Gang* and *Washington Week in Review* is to understand the rage women felt watching the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings. It is the spectacle of middle-aged white men in suits pontificating in abstract terms about things that affect people in real ways. There are exceptions – NBC's Connie Chung and CNN's Bernard Shaw – but they are few and far between.

I do not, as a rule, watch television news, even though I am a white man approaching middle age who owns a couple of suits and who has been known to pontificate on television. I prefer to get my news from newspapers. After all, one of the more interesting statistics promulgated in the past few years states that the average network newscast contains less news and information than the front page of a good daily newspaper. So to plunge into intensive televising is like diving off the ten-metre board to discover that one's target is a shallow wading pool.

Network news coverage of the presidential campaign has come to resemble nothing so much as sports coverage. First, the newsreaders give us the score by citing the latest polls. Then they tell us what happened today. Then they go to the video of the game, usually excerpts of the candidates' speeches or public appearances, followed by the rebuttal footage. "President Bush today accused Bill Clinton of blah blah blah". "Bill Clinton said he did not blah blah blah". Then they go to the equivalent of the post-game locker-room interview, which can be distinguished from the game footage because the candidates are usually getting on to a plane or a helicopter, and are frequently not wearing their game uniforms, i.e., not wearing ties.

The vaunted objectivity of US television news is an excuse for avoiding any sort of truly analytical thought about the political process. Television journalists (which is almost an oxymoron) are creatures who operate within the system, thus they can never question the system which they serve. The buzzword of the 1992 presidential campaign is 'change', but no television journalist has ever suggested what kind of changes are necessary to the decaying structure of capitalism in its decadent phase. With the American obsession with winning, it never occurred to any of the white men in suits that just because the Soviet system 'lost' the Cold War, it didn't mean that America had won.

Maybe Americans should let the artists cover the news. Robert Altman's seventeen-year-old *Nashville* – and his brilliant 1988 television series, *Tanner '88* – and Tim Robbins' brand-new *Bob Roberts* display more understanding of the political system than do any of official political commentators. *'Bob Roberts'* opens on 11 September and is reviewed on page 47 of this issue

'Did Tim Robbins anticipate Perot's arrival with his political mockumentary, 'Bob Roberts', a satiric portrait – some have called it the 'This Is Spinal Tap' – of American politics?'

Touch of evil

Michael Eaton

Anyone who has tried to run a film society soon comes to realise that, in comparison to cinephiliacs, train spotters are non-starters in the Creepshow Derby – there is something about cinema that attracts strange people like a dead seal on Skegness beach attracts blowflies. When this revelation dawns, it is invariably accompanied by the concomitant realisation that, perforce, one must also be pretty strange oneself to want to creep alone into a darkened room in the middle of a sunny afternoon to worship as a celebrant at the altar of Saint Cinema, where a distorted simulacrum of one's own tiny fantasies is blown up beyond all earthly proportion for one's own solipsistic delectation. Sooner or later we have to ask ourselves this fundamental question: is there something inherently psychotic about loving movies?

Of course, the forces of authority in this century of cinema – be they religious or political – have never underestimated the power of the image. Some have tried to incorporate it – the first feature-length movie was possibly a representation of the Passion made by the Australian Salvation Army. Others have tried to tame it – it was the unpredictable responses of regional Catholic dioceses which forced Hollywood into establishing its own censorship code. Others have urged their followers to reject it altogether – in James Baldwin's memoir *The Devil Finds Work* (rest of proverb: 'for idle hands to do'), it was the very act of cinema-going, as opposed to the content of specific films, which the elders of his church found so sinful. They realised that something disturbing resides in the very mechanism of cinema.

It is this issue – the relationship between cinema and evil – which is the central theme of a vertiginous new novel, Theodore Roszak's *Flicker* (Bantam Books, £6.99). The name of the author is one that had eluded me since the late 60s, when his book *The Making of the Counter Culture* was required reading. Now he is a novelist, so once again the counter culture has been relocated on to the culture counter.

Most novels about the movies, good or bad, have tended to be either insider gen on the human interactions behind movie-making (*The Last Tycoon*, *The Player*); gossip about the lives of stars (*Inside Daisy Clover*, *Hollywood Wives*) or, less frequently, speculations on the nature of illusion and reality (*Day of the Locust*, *The Moviegoer*). *Flicker* is all of these and much more.

It is not just concerned with cinema archaeology – the plot turns on the discovery of a lost horror-film auteur Max Castle. It goes on to take us through cinema sociology – it charts all the trends of American art-house audience response from the post-war 'discovery' of neo-realism, through the *nouvelle vague*, through Hollywood auteurism to post-punk deconstruction; cinema ontology – what is the essence of film?; cinema phenomenology – what happens to us when we watch a film; and cinema apparatus – the real 'meaning' of cin-

ema resides not in the content of particular films, but in the machine that produces them. In short, Roszak has produced a book which novelises not so much the cinema, as the abiding concerns of film theory.

This is quite an achievement in an era when 'the moment of theory' seems confined to the dustbin of the post-Cold War world. More so, in that by grounding theoretical positions firmly in the actions of his characters, Roszak manages to make theory not only fun, but, as the book rushes towards its paranoid denouement, a matter of life and death. There is no room here to pre-empt potential readers of the adventure they will inevitably undergo if they pick up this weighty slab of prose (the book is an airport-sized 669 pages, a shame, given its subject matter, he couldn't have subbed it down three pages to 666). Suffice to say that, on one level, *Flicker* acts as dizzying valedictory to all the things theorists have tried to do with cinema, reminding those of us who have slogged through Kracauer, Bazin, Metz *et al* (works which movie-industry insiders dismiss as academic irrelevances) that it is, indeed, necessary to think beyond the surface of the screen.

But beyond this, Roszak manages to address the metaphysics of the cinema machine by uncovering a prehistory of image-making which, as befits a writer on the edge of the millennium, takes us back to one of the oldest struggles pervading Western epistemology: the struggle between monotheism and Manicheism. The hidden history of Manichean thought – that the world and we who people it are creations of an evil demiurge who is constantly at war with an abstract creator and that the outcome of this war will remain a mystery until the final battle of the forces of light against the forces of darkness – is given an objective reality in the flicker effect of the movie projector.

The precise alternation of light and darkness in the mechanism of the apparatus provides the grounding of the cinematic experience, leading to the physically inexplicable mechanism of 'persistence of vision'. When Roszak reveals that the Maltese cross which makes this illusion possible was a symbol of the Knights Templar, the act of cinema-going itself suddenly takes on the lineaments of transgression. Maybe *The Maltese Falcon* wasn't really a detective story at all.

Suddenly I was struck with the blinding



In the dark: 'Day of the Locust'

'Paul Sharits' films, for instance, flashed coloured lights before our eyes at such a mesmerising rate that I began to suspect that these were CIA experiments designed to trigger the Manchurian Candidate'

realisation of why I and others like me had spent so much of our youth seeking out the more *recherché* endeavours of the New American Cinema. Paul Sharits' films, for instance, flashed coloured lights before our eyes at such a mesmerising rate that I began to suspect that these were CIA experiments designed to trigger the Manchurian Candidate. Suddenly the hidden agenda of the 'apparatus school' of French theory was revealed to me.

I recalled a seminal moment at the UCLA film school in the early 80s, where I was pilloried by one incipiently politically correct section of the student body for being 'ironic'. Concomitant with my visit, an important French theorist was there to unleash an extension of his/her theory of cinema (that meaning resides in the mechanism) to television. The burden of the argument was that the nature of the television message resides in those random white dots which flash across the surface of the tube and are known as 'snow' (a somewhat unfamiliar concept for Californians). I was confused for a while, until the college technician confided in me that the "asshole hadn't plugged in the aerial".

Since reading *Flicker*, I have once again come to realise that these issues are of fundamental importance and that we were not deluded when we began to think that our film society was attracting a strange kind of clientele seemingly as transfixed by Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly* as by Busby Berkeley's *Dames*. For the plot of this extraordinary novel takes us, fortunately reconstructed cinephiliacs, literally into the Heart of Darkness. One of Castle's projects was to work with Welles on his unrealised film *maudit* of Conrad's novella. If you remember, it set out to be a piece of 'first-person' cinema in which the 'I' of the narrator was fused with the 'eye' of the camera.

This is not simply recondite entertainment (though the book is vastly entertaining), for questions of how the world was created and whether our role in it is good or evil have suddenly resurfaced with a vengeance in contemporary debates on the institutions of science and morality. Physicists, ecologists, psychotherapists and self-appointed New Age shamans, let alone semioticians and columnists for cinema journals, have all exposed us to the shortcomings of mechanistic rationalism.

There is a character in *Flicker* called Father Rosenzweig who is a defrocked Jesuit and part of a secret society known as *Oculus Dei* – the eye of God, the way we *should* see the world, not the way cinema makes us see it. He interprets his vocation by trying to assassinate Henri Langlois. As we know, he does not succeed. Perhaps those fundamentalists who tried, again fortunately unsuccessfully, to stop James Baldwin going to the movies knew what they were talking about.

Still, when all's said and done (which, incidentally, it never is), the Church of Rome was pretty adept at constructing its own extremely potent medieval movie theatres: they were called Gothic cathedrals – but that's another story.



David Thompson considers
Leos Carax's extravagant
'Les Amants du Pont Neuf'

ONCE UPON A TIME IN PARIS



Fireworks

This sequence for me is the beginning of 'l'inespéré', the un hoped for. People are very proud to tell me, "I love the film, but it's not the expensive scenes I like the best!". I say, "that's fine, but how do you know which they are?" I wanted to have dance and music in the film, but this scene was really an attempt to capture the start of a relationship. The scene also represents to me what is happening to the city of Paris, with the gap between this expensive public spectacle and the miserable lives of the homeless.

I mixed the music myself roughly on my little machine at home. It was supposed to sound like the wind bringing in music that would appear and disappear, going from rock 'n' roll to rap to African rhythms and so on. I like to play music on the set, which of course they did in the silent days. Keeping music on, I find people are less upset about not being able to talk. Depending on the scene, we would play the Kodaly, or Arvo Part, or just any stupid contemporary song.



The look of love

This is the moment when Michele says, "The sky is white", so that Alex can reply, "The clouds are black".

When I was at school, as I didn't talk to anyone, I was always looking for strategies to talk to girls. One was the code Alex uses, which I thought of trying with the girl I later wanted to put in a film, Florence. I thought I'd leave a note with a code saying, "somebody is in love with you, if you're in love with someone, just say this strange line to them, and if it's me, I'll say this other line back". But I was so afraid that I'd just be a witness to her saying it to another guy, I didn't go through with it.

Looking at people is how everything starts, and how people looked when I first saw them is very important to me. I would like

every day to be able to see people for the first time whom I know are going to be important to me. It's the best experience you can have, when there's no relationship yet, but there's the hope that you will meet again. It makes you feel very alive, whether or not something is going to happen.

'Les Amants' is the first film I have done where you might think there are subjective shots. I used to frame every shot so that you were sure it wasn't seen by any one person. When actors were talking face to face, I would always place the other person in shot, or make sure the look didn't go too close to the camera. This wasn't a case of putting any theory into practice, however, I just realised I had done it that way after completing 'Mauvais Sang'. With 'Les Amants', I just wanted everything to be as simple as possible.

French cinema in the 80s appeared to be thriving, with a new generation of filmmakers to rival the old guard who had once ridden on the *nouvelle vague* (at the end of the decade, *Cahiers du cinéma* was able to publish a dictionary of eighty *cinéastes* whose careers had flourished in this period). The three golden boys were Jean-Jacques Beineix, purveyor of such film equivalents of glossy magazines as the 1981 *Diva* (opera chic meets pop promo) and 1986 *Betty Blue* (exquisite suffering); Luc Besson, who in *Subway* (1985) and *The Big Blue* (1988) blended the adult comic strip with the new age; and the odd man out, ever-silent loner Leos Carax. While Beineix would talk any amount of elaborate justifications, and Besson would shrug off any hint of intellectualism, the aesthetic resolutely offered in their films was one in which the surface is everything. Carax, by contrast, seemingly went out of his way to make the audience uncomfortable, and to explore feelings most of us try to hide.

His first film, *Boy Meets Girl* (1983), was a black-and-white trip through a Paris night haunted by the spectre of Godard: a fragmented dream of post-adolescent yearnings

and an encyclopædia for alienation freaks. His lonely hero, Alex, was played by newcomer Denis Lavant, whose strange, flattened face defied the usual definitions of ugliness or beauty; the elusive object of Alex's desire was Mireille Perrier, whose waif-like delicacy was reminiscent of the heroines of the silent era. Carax was later to reveal that he was looking for faces like Lillian Gish's and Peter Lorre's, a choice which complemented his unfashionable artistic principles. Yet for all its gaucheries, technical waywardness and potentially excessive miserabilism, *Boy Meets Girl* flew in the face of Carax's trendier compatriots, and has stood the test of time well. It even seems a lot funnier now than its initial reception suggested.

Between realism and fantasy

Carax was only twenty-three when he made *Boy Meets Girl*, but the film's sustained success in Paris, where it won excellent reviews, the Prix Delluc and a six-month run, established him as an auteur. For his next film, his loyal producer Alain Dahan (who died earlier this year) found a larger budget – about £1.5 million compared to £250,000 for *Boy Meets Girl*. Carax found

another beautiful female star, Juliette Binoche, highly acclaimed for her searing performance in André Techiné's *Rendez-vous*.

For his second film, Carax avoided the pitfall of so many young directors and managed to make something of equally startling quality. With its futuristic thriller setting, *Mauvais Sang* (1986) may tip its hat to Godard's *Alphaville*, but the stunningly composed colour photography of Jean-Yves Escoffier and the intensely musical performances of the cast – Denis Lavant (again called Alex) in one corner, veteran Michel Piccoli in another – announced that a distinctive Carax style had arrived. Ostensibly a fantasy centred on an Aids-like disease and the quest for its cure, the film's main subject was once again the search for love and for ways of expressing that love. Though disjointed in construction, *Mauvais Sang* was filled with extraordinary images such as the lovers' embrace during a parachute fall, an open car ride through the heat of the night, and a frenzied solo to a David Bowie song.

Carax's third film – perhaps intentionally, perhaps not – was to become a *cause célèbre* of French cinema. In essence, it should have been

Playing with fire

I could find other actors who could do fire-eating, but only Denis could do it with such incredible movements. That's what is going to make it hard for me to make films without him. We had a choreographer and an acrobat to work with Juliette and Denis, because I wanted there to be a lot of movement and dance. The actors would work on their exercises all the time, and it helped keep them sane through the long filming.

People tell me that when they see the film, they're afraid that Juliette is going to be physically hurt. For me, there's a strange frontier between being and acting. If you want an actor to be drunk in a movie, should he be drunk or not? When they ask me, I say they should drink, but it's up to them to find out how much. If it breaks down inhibitions, then it's great. Bresson does this by getting them to

repeat lines to find the right music of the words. I hate it when actors do what they know how to do, just as I hate it when I know what I'm doing. So I make some shitty suggestions, or they may be perfect – it's a question of finding the right alchemy.

The thing is to share an experience with people, and that's true for me too. The river was 13 degrees below zero when Juliette was water-skiing, and she hardly knew how to do it. Actually she fell about a metre away from the stone banks, and I kept that shot in the film. But I went into the water with them too, and learned how to water-ski. I would never do that with Jean-Paul Belmondo, not that I care so much about his life, just that I wouldn't be sharing the experience. I wouldn't film something dangerous for someone else's script, nor if a producer just wanted a stunt in a film. It's a question of morals. If a serious accident did happen, I would be destroyed.



a simple production. The hero – Alex/Denis – is one of Paris' homeless who takes refuge on the Pont Neuf while it is closed for repairs. To the irritation of the bridge's unofficial homeless landlord, an old man called Hans, they are joined by a third party, Michele, a former art student with a worsening eye infection. While Michele agonises over a past lover, Alex falls in love with her, and finally begins to make contact when they celebrate France's Revolutionary bicentennial with their own form of anarchic abandon – wild dancing on the bridge during the firework display and an impromptu, dangerous attempt at water-skiing on the Seine. Despite Alex's efforts to hide the news from her, Michele finally learns that she can be cured and leaves the bridge; Hans slides into the Seine; Alex serves a jail sentence. Some years later they are reunited, but Michele, cured by a doctor who has become her lover, is unable to accept Alex. In his frustration, he plunges with her into the Seine, but they are rescued by a barge en route for Le Havre, the same route once covered by Vigo's *L'Atalante*.

The story of how a film about three people on a bridge became one of the most expensive

ever made in France is recounted elsewhere, but suffice it to say that when *Les Amants du Pont Neuf* was finally released in Paris last year, it suffered greatly from the attendant press coverage. An industry opposed to indulging a young director – especially one receiving considerable assistance from France's enviable systems of subsidy – was not going to let him off lightly. The initially curious audience dwindled fast, and the film is never likely to make its money back. Hardly surprising news, the cynical might say, from a director quoted as saying his favourite US films of the 80s were *Heaven's Gate* and *Once Upon a Time in America*. I think a more apposite parallel might be drawn with the extravagance and daring of Erich von Stroheim, and Carax's magnificent set – a halfway house between realism and fantasy – certainly recalls the silent master's own rebuilding of Monte Carlo in Los Angeles for *Foolish Wives*.

Obsessive passions

Perhaps in Britain and elsewhere the film will be more easily appreciated for what it is: a remarkable, if uneven, hymn to the importance of love. If the Alex trilogy, as it has



Art and artists

When the Louvre authorities read the script, they said the scene where Michele and Hans break into the museum was impossible, their security was too good! Of course they were afraid of us filming with a candle close to a painting, but once we were in, well, after five hours someone has to take a piss... and we got the shot.

I let Juliette choose the painting. When I first met her five years ago, I gave her a book of Rembrandt self-portraits, which I didn't like at all at the time. Juliette was the first person to take me into a museum, and she made me see the paintings differently. In the film, the paintings done by Michele are all by Juliette, and I would ask her every day to draw the scenes we were about to shoot.

She's sitting on Hans' shoulders, and he looks somewhere between Rembrandt and Orson Welles himself. A nude scene in a museum at night, it's either going to be kitsch or academic. What happened was that she takes off her clothes, though you don't see it. They each had a small microphone attached to them, and when they embraced they recorded the heartbeat of the other. That sound was so incredible, I had to keep it in.

Final act

This scene, when Alex and Michele finally meet up again on the bridge – well, I'm not pleased with it. The actors were so relieved to be finished with their characters as homeless people, that they went too far with nice make-up and clothes! It was OK for Denis to have his hair well cut, but Juliette looks too cute. But by that time, I felt I owed them a lot.

Until Denis' accident I didn't have the money to shoot on a set, but I think I had always intended to make the film this way. I just wish it had been faster, not three years. I didn't always believe I would finish it, I even quit once or twice, but then it wasn't just my film. Denis, Juliette, Jean-Yves and Alain, they all stayed committed – it wasn't just like sleeping with a person for one night, it was a three-year honeymoon, with all its ups and downs.

Juliette wanted a happy ending. For me it was like *'Romeo and Juliet'*, where the characters may die on stage, but the actors take a final bow before the curtain. As to the barge, I was haunted by a picture of an ornate figurehead on the first page of the book of *'Celine'*. It had nothing to do with Vigo or *'L'Atalante'*, really.



become known, can be categorised, I would suggest that whereas *Boy Meets Girl* is about loneliness, and *Mauvais Sang* tenderness, then *Les Amants du Pont Neuf* is about ecstasy. Once again, Carax has proved that film-making which reflects his own obsessive passions – in particular for his lead actress, a love affair that now seems ended – can result in magnificent cinema.

Leos Carax

Filmography as director and scriptwriter

b. 1960, Suresnes, France
Real name Alexandre Dupont (Leos Carax is an anagram of 'Alex Oscar')

La Fille revêe (La Fille aimée)

(1978) short (unfinished)

Strangulation Blues (1980) 17 mins

Boy Meets Girl (1983) 104 mins

Mauvais Sang (The Night is Young) (1986) 119 mins

Les Amants Du Pont Neuf

(1990) 126 mins

Carax has also acted in Garrel's *'Les Ministères de l'Art'* (1988) and Godard's *'King Lear'* (1987)



Leos Carax talks about Jean-Luc Godard and David Bowie, silent cinema and working with actors, to David Thompson

LEOS CARAX

● Unlike your previous films, *'Les Amants du Pont Neuf'* begins with an unblinking, documentary-style exposition of the life of the homeless in Paris, before moving into the 'created' world of the bridge and the lovers. What was behind this conception?

Of course I've been attacked for making a film with a lot of money about people with none, and going from raw reality into fiction. For me, it's an attempt to break down the frontier between what people call fiction and non-fiction, which doesn't interest me. Real homeless people and actors, a false bridge and genuine fireworks, money and no money – I didn't mix these things consciously. *Mauvais Sang* was too controlled; I used camerawork, lighting, angles, the choreography of the actors to reassure myself. I wasn't upset by what people said about Denis' appearance, and I wanted him and Juliette to be beautiful. So the film was too pleased with itself; in *Les Amants* I wanted to go for something more raw.

This is your third film with Denis Lavant, and in each case he is called Alex. Does it complete a trilogy, and how much of the work is autobiographical?

I didn't think about it when I started out, but now I call it a trilogy. And since Denis is my own age, and I've made the films with the women I was living with at the time, I guess there has to be some autobiography in there. The bridge is in every film that I've made too, and I've always had problems with my eyes.

Why is it important for there to be a relationship with the women you are filming?

In my last years at school I started to play pinball, and I became hooked like an addict to one special machine in one special café. There was a girl I liked called Florence, but all the time I was at school, I never talked to her. I thought through film-making I could have a relationship with another machine, and also with this girl. I had a job putting up street posters, and I ripped off the company and bought a 16mm Bolex camera. I found a guy who could operate it, and asked another to approach Florence to play a part in my script. Actually, I hadn't written anything. We started with a scene in which she wakes up from a nightmare, and she was supposed to be nude. She was afraid, and so was I, so I had to find another girl. I lost interest and never edited the film. But that's how it started – it was always a machine and a girl.

Have you been influenced by the first films



Imaginary city: Carax's set for *'Les Amants du Pont Neuf'*, an extraordinary homage to a city and its bridges

you remember having seen?

As I kid, I used to love *The Avengers* on television, especially Diana Rigg. Then I became fascinated by Marilyn Monroe. It's very childish, but I believed that if I'd known her, she wouldn't have committed suicide. So I had strong relationships with actresses before I found out there was such a thing as a director.

When I finished school at sixteen, I came to Paris, not knowing anyone. I went to see a lot of films, but the most powerful experience was seeing silent films at the Cinéma-thèque, especially as I was silent myself: it was as if I'd woken up in a promised land. I started to notice the names on the credits, that Lillian Gish had been directed by D. W. Griffith, and then I would see a Griffith film without her, or one directed by King Vidor. Serge Daney was then editing *Cahiers du cinéma* and he offered me a way to see films for free. There was a university cinema course too, and though I was never there officially, I was able to see a lot of Godard. I was fascinated by the Godard-Anna Karina relationship, that he was living and working with the same woman.

It would appear that Godard's films have had a profound stylistic influence on you. I was interested in his style at the beginning, but now I feel so lost in my own film-making, I don't think about how it relates to anyone else's. Of course, Godard was liberating, but now everyone in rock promos and commercials is shooting like that. I think the compositions in silent films are so extraordinary, like Epstein, that I have paid tribute to them, especially since I was discovering cinema at the same time as making it. I remember that when I saw *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* on television at the age of eleven or twelve, I realised that there was someone behind the camera. I think Bresson is one of the few artists of our century.

How did you begin as a director?

My first film was a 16mm black-and-

white short called *La Fille revêe*, shot in an attic room by the Louvre, where I was living at the time. It was terrible. The second was in 35mm and was called *Strangulation Blues*. Though I was never a film student, to me it looks like a student film, as if I'm trying to prove something. I was trying to raise money for a script I wrote when I was seventeen called *Déjà Vu*, when I met Mireille Perrier, who wanted to be an actress but hadn't yet made a film, so I decided to develop the ideas of *Boy Meets Girl*. It took a long time to find the boy, then one day I went to the employment agency for actors, and saw a picture of Denis.

How do you work with the actors?

I'm much better now than I used to be. I hardly directed at all at first, but with Denis in *Boy Meets Girl*, I'd soon get angry if it wasn't what I wanted right away, and I would have to wait until they found it for me. I worked from my phobias, eliminating those tics that actors have that I can't stand. To avoid them I might have to compose something very unnatural in the way they move, their expression or their voice. On *Mauvais Sang* I felt for the first time that I had the balance right between artifice and naturalism. Shooting that film was a very happy time – but then I could film Juliette for hours.

Music is important in your films, with some very unpredictable choices – very early David Bowie, for instance.

I don't really know anything about music. I discovered Bowie when I was ten years old, before anyone knew about him, but I don't listen to what he does today. I try to use music in a different way. I'd like to do a musical one day, but the problem is in finding a composer. Though I've met a few, I haven't felt able to collaborate with any of them.

The Kodaly Sonata for Cello seems very central to *Les Amants*.

I discovered the piece when I first began thinking about the film, and I realised that I wanted to edit

Les Amants in the same way as Kodaly wrote for the cello. It's really the greatest instrument, because you can have very abrupt, detached notes, and also sustain a note very slowly and very deeply. I'm interested in rhythms, too, which you're not supposed to be in films, because there's a convention that they can be made in only one of three rhythms. But I really wanted to construct the film like that Sonata.

Editing *Boy Meets Girl* was a nightmare, but with *Mauvais Sang* I found Nelly Quettier and it began to be pleasurable. I found my own way of editing, and I thought I would do *Les Amants* on my own, but my relationship with Nelly was good and so we worked together on that too. Editing is so close to music: for example, in the Bicentennial sequence, it felt right to accelerate the film, especially as it is the moment the couple begin to talk to each other. You have had the same cameraman, Jean-Yves Escoffier, on all three films.

How do you work together?

I could never get along with my cameramen on my short films. I had decided I only wanted to work with beginners, and Jean-Yves had hardly done anything, though he was ten years older than me. We met in a bar, talked, and immediately I felt a strong relationship. He knows what I hate in lighting, and when it comes to movements, we share the camera. When you see a smooth tracking shot in a film, it always feels to me like being a kid riding a sledge in the snow; it has no reality for me as movement. So for *Les Amants*, because we're on a bridge with a cobbled surface, we invented a special machine to do travelling shots. I held the camera myself in the skiing sequences. When the camera wobbles violently, that to me is a reflection of an inner feeling of trembling.

Which are the most successful sequences in the film for you?

I'm mostly disappointed. But one is when Alex is with the homeless guy

on the bench at the beginning. It wasn't an improvisation, but it was something alive, there was a truth in it and in my relationship with that character. When I started editing, I liked the image of Juliette dancing, because you see her at every age, from a young girl to an older woman. And in the water-skiing, I was surprised by Alex when he looks back at Michele from the boat, when they're separated by twenty metres of rope. The interest isn't in the fireworks, but in the relationship between this guy, heavy and solid on a powerful boat, and this girl on the end of a rope.

How important is the script to you, if the film-making is such an evolutionary process?

I don't really like writing scripts, though you have to do it to raise money and to interest producers. For me, it's more like a musical score, with colours and emotions. For *Les Amants*, my starting point was two strong feelings I have about life and love. One is the 'irredeemable'; the other a difficult word to translate – *l'inespéré*, what you don't dare hope for. It's something you don't really dare dream about, but you do dream about it nonetheless. These are feelings I've had since I was very young – the fear that I might die or lose a leg or go blind – and that's one reason I was interested in homeless people. When I first lived in Paris, these were the people I related to most, though it's often difficult, because they're often tired or drunk.

Homeless people really live that irredeemable life. They can lose a finger and hardly notice it. I spent a year visiting the shelter at Nanterre, where there was a young doctor who cared for them. When he began eight years ago, a man came in complaining his foot was itching. They took off the shoe, and his foot came with it. I guess that's everybody's nightmare, but for these people it's real. And that feeling

is contagious if you spend time with them, which is why I think people find the film disturbing.

Was the cast always going to be Juliette Binoche and Denis Lavant?

Yes. But then I like to film kids, and I also like to film older people. I knew that I wanted an older stranger in the story. When I was looking for an older man for *Mauvais Sang*, I had a call one day from Sterling Hayden. Even though he'd never seen anything by me, he wanted to be in my film before he died. I'm not a very tall person, and he was very tall; I was young and he was old. To me he was even more beautiful than that he had been when he was young. It was a very strong relationship, and I wanted someone like him for Hans. If Orson Welles had been alive, I would have done it with him. For three years I did tests, I saw a lot of people – Serge Gainsbourg, Alain Cuny, Richard Widmark, Glenn Ford. I even went to Marlon Brando's house with Juliette. Then I found this German theatre director, who had never acted in a film before.

With all the problems of production, did you learn more about the industry?

I discovered that there was no industry, just incompetence. I don't despise producers, I think they're important, but they have to make money, and my first producer, Alain Dahan, never had money. He had troubles, he was difficult to work with, he was like a gangster, but he still made movies, and I loved him. We would have dinner together every night while we were shooting; we could drink together, we could talk or be silent together. I regret that he died, and without him I'm not sure I could have made those three films.

In Hollywood there was a great tradition of producers. In Chaplin's *Modern Times*, you know after seeing the factory scenes that a machine can cause you to lose a leg, and I think Hollywood was like that. Nowadays it's

every man for himself, and a lot of actors are having their lives damaged – for example, a young actress is taken on for one film and then thrown away. Getting closer to the industry made me feel that I had the power: they could kill me, but I'd be happy anyway. Juliette, Denis and I would have finished the film with video cameras if necessary.

Where does this leave you in France?

Do you plan to make films in the US?

I'm sick of the French film industry. They are either contemptuous or condescending towards me, and I'm quite a proud person. After ten years, I realise that I've got to move on, to meet new actors. At least now I have three films to show, however imperfect they may be. But I have to work with people who are very close, whom I can respect. I can make films with stars – I've done it with Piccoli, even if it wasn't the happiest experience. I could make a film tomorrow with Sharon Stone – of course, I'd ask her to come to Las Vegas and marry me first!

Is 'Les Amants' a farewell to Paris?

I've loved the city for ten years – it has the most beautiful bridges – but it's becoming more dead every year. Unlike cities in the US, where wealthy people move out to the suburbs and the centre becomes a ghetto, the centre of Paris is growing richer and richer, and with poor people coming up from the south to cause a bit of anarchy, it's becoming a mess. I've just discovered Senegal, but I couldn't make movies there. I guess I'll try to live in Los Angeles. At least you have Mexican neighbourhoods, or black neighbourhoods, and then there's the desert two hours away, Las Vegas five hours away, the Grand Canyon six hours away. The last line of *Les Amants* is "You can all stay asleep in Paris!" Yes, that's my farewell too.

'Les Amants du Pont Neuf' opens on 11 September and is reviewed on page 46

PRODUCTION HISTORY

1988

Carax completes his script, and Alain Dahan, with co-producer Philippe Diaz, agrees a budget of 32 million FF (£3.2 million) for a twenty-week shoot. Permission is granted for three weeks' filming on the Pont Neuf (25 July to 15 August). Construction is begun on a modest set of the bridge in a field in Lansargues, close to Montpellier, for the filming of the night scenes.

Prior to filming, Juliette Binoche and Denis Lavant spend time among down-and-outs, and Lavant learns acrobatics and fire-eating. One week before shooting is to begin, Lavant badly injures the tendon in his left wrist. Production designer Michel Vandestien proposes (with help from the insurance money) to build up the Lansargues set so it can be used for daytime sequences, too, instead of the Pont Neuf itself. 250,000 cubic metres of earth are dug out by forty bulldozers to recreate the Seine.

8 August: Filming begins in Paris (the Boulevard Sebastopol sequence that opens the film), followed by other scenes in which no dialogue is recorded.

15 December: With the budget exceeded because of the extra cost of the set, production is closed down.

1989

Dahan looks for other producers to help out. Screenings of about 30 minutes of footage are held for interested parties, among whom is Christian Fechner. Fechner has made a fortune producing commercial hits for French consumption only, such as the series, 'Les Charlots', and Patrice Leconte's 'Les Bronzes' comedies, and has now sold his back catalogue to the national water company and turned to 'art' films. He is currently busy producing 'Camille Claudel'.

Swiss millionaire, Francis von Buren, who has Francesco Rosi's 'Chronicle of a Death Foretold' among his producer's credits, forms a company called Pari à Deux with Dominique Vignet, and they re-start the production.

25 July: Shooting begins again on the set, which has suffered considerable weather damage. Five weeks in, von Buren calls a halt after some 18 million FF has been spent. More screenings of the incomplete footage are held. The Minister of the Arts, Jack Lang, is particularly concerned that the film be finished. The cast refuses other offers – Binoche turns down Elia Kazan, Robert De Niro and Krzysztof Kieslowski.

1990

15 January: Filming begins again in Paris, and is completed in March.

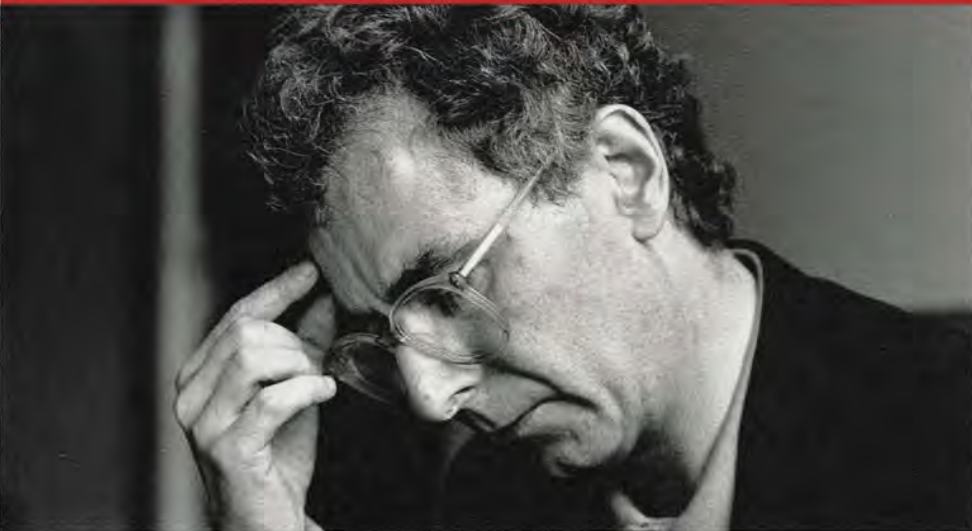
16 October: 'Les Amants du Pont Neuf' opens in Paris in numerous Gaumont cinemas. After a few successful weeks, the box office drops rapidly. Fechner now says the final budget is around 100 million FF, but many believe it to be closer to 160 million FF.



My own private bridge: Paris' Pont Neuf, which appears in all Carax's films, was recreated at great expense in a field near Montpellier

Jonathan Powell, controller of BBC1, talks with James Saynor about popular programming, remits – and serials and series

QUALITY TIME



JANE BOWN / THE OBSERVER

● Hugh Greene, the BBC's combative director general in the 60s, once smirkingly described his role as "the universal Aunt Sally of our day". Like Dr Johnson compiling his dictionary, the director general's success was "without applause and [his] diligence without reward". Greene prided himself on having an 'editorial' rather than a purely 'administrative' role. Latterly, DGs have preferred to clothe themselves in managerial rather than impresario garb, and let their channel controllers take the rap for the output.

Jonathan Powell, controller of BBC1, is the new Aunt Sally of our day – under intense pressure both for failing to score high enough ratings, and for serving up too much pap, this summer more than ever. The satisfactions of the job, he says, echoing Greene's self-pity but without the smirk, are rather private these days, and come from "looking across a week's programming and thinking, well, nobody else will notice, but that's actually rather a good week of shows. You become used to your own satisfactions becoming muddled in the general welter of comment and criticism".

The welter increasingly seems to come from within Powell's own institution. In the stuttering 'debate' on the future of the BBC, senior corporation management – an echelon from which channel controllers are, bizarrely, excluded – appears tempted to phase out much populist programming from BBC1. The channel might instead become more of a boutique of highly 'distinctive' shows culled from the various genres, each programme rigorously metered for the mysterious aura of distinction.

Powell falls in behind such thinking with a conspicuous wariness. The optimistic new formula for carbohydrate-free television sounds

suspiciously close to the 'innovation' remit for Channel 4, and Powell doubts that you could cherry-pick such a schedule without a large production slew of inevitably routine material in the general-entertainment field. (The experience of Channel 4 would seem to bear this out.) Meanwhile, the plan for senior policy-makers to apply co-ordinated 'distinctiveness' tests is the sort of systems analysis that cuts sharply across the free creative culture of the programme-making class, from producers to controllers – a culture in which the quixotic pursuit of talent over long periods of time, according to purely intuitive impresario norms, has been the key to the highs and lows of BBC television since Greene.

Powell was formerly one of the most successful producers of drama the BBC has ever seen. As a controller, he started with equally impressive results – only to see ITV outperform BBC1 over the past two years, most gallingly in the field of popular drama. Powell talks of these "dark days", and pins the blame on three factors – the BBC's failure to spot what ITV was up to; a lack of investment from the top; and the natural "cycle of television". Of these, the second was the most important, and has now been remedied by a big new injection of funds into drama and comedy.

Thus armed, Powell believes his brand of entertainment-based television can take on whatever the new winds of free-market competition rustle up – a stout faith in BBC popular programming that wouldn't have unsettled Greene, but which in 1992/93 suddenly sounds like a quest for an El Dorado. And Powell may not have long to prove his point. His contract runs out at the end of next year, nine months after John Birt takes over as director general.

How different will BBC1 be in five years' time?

Who's to know? It may not be here, of course. It may be funded by advertising or sold to Rupert Murdoch. I won't be running it in five years' time, but what I would hope is that it would still be a major player in terms of its audience share. I would hope that it would still have a strong commitment to a bedrock of popular programming. But there is also a lot of room to change the balance. There are certain areas that, subject to funding, I'd frankly have no objections to moving away from. Light entertainment has always been a difficult area. I think we'd certainly welcome a BBC1 that had very few quiz shows, but I would hope that the channel would still have an absolute commitment to situation comedy. You don't produce *Blackadder* or *One Foot in the Grave* by setting out to do these programmes; what you have is a commitment to the amount of comedy that you're doing, and out of that arise some of the great comedies. You never get those unless you're doing a lot of it.

So is the much-mooted move to the 'higher ground' a historic change, or simply a tweaking of the schedule in the way it's always been tweaked from time to time?

What one means by the 'higher ground' is open to a lot of interpretation. As long as there's a range of programmes on BBC1 so that it looks different from the other channels – that's very important – I'd be happy for more range and more quality. A lot of it depends on investment, of course. But it would be a mistake for BBC1 to eschew popular forms of programming, and I don't think anyone has the intention that it should do so.

What about this new buzzword, 'distinctiveness'?

It seems a woolly concept squarely in the tradition of talking about 'quality' and 'standards'. Does it really mean anything different?

I think there are a number of ways of looking at what is distinctive, and one should look at the totality of the service rather than the individual programmes within it. BBC1 should continue to offer a proper range of programming, and it would be a terrible mistake for it to lose that. Strategically, it would make the channel vulnerable to other people who offer it; that's one of the lessons the American networks have learnt. It's a very grand ambition to try to do that and retain an audience share; nobody in the world has managed it. On the other hand, there seems to me to be every reason to try. When you come to judge each particular show, it seems good to ask, "Is this new within a genre? Is it merely replicating other things?" But you have to be judicious; I suspect there's a bit of over-literality around the place at the moment.

Well, they're talking about having performance criteria that will be applied to more or less every programme. What can that mean in practice?

It's a perfectly legitimate exercise, if you make a popular programme, to look at the size of the audience and say, "This programme ought to get an audience of about 10 million..."

But they're not talking about ratings, are they?

They're talking about all kinds of criteria. What I think people are working on is a more sophisticated analysis of how you judge your output. Does it deliver audiences? What kinds

of audiences? Does the audience think it's quality output?

One distinctiveness measurement that springs to mind is audience appreciation. Might it make sense to have everything driven by the audience-appreciation index, with a quality hurdle set at an appropriate level for each category of programme?

It's a good aim to have, but it can be dangerous. There are several shows that have a low audience appreciation, but when you look into it, you find there's a huge audience appreciation among twelve to thirty-five year olds, but the programme is hated by older people. If the BBC can develop criteria that can demonstrate audience satisfaction in a more sophisticated fashion, that seems to me sensible. The current crude measurements of audience size and share will in any case become outdated tools in an environment where satellite has a higher share, and so on.

Isn't all the talk about distinctiveness an implicit, direct rebuke? To say that we suddenly need to start being distinctive – doesn't that imply that hitherto some programmes have been commissioned in the full knowledge that they would be rubbishy?

You never commission a programme in the full knowledge that it will be rubbishy. You commission programmes that don't work, and that can happen. Sometimes you can't judge distinctiveness until the programme's on the screen. What I think is important is that if the BBC in the future is to be, so to speak, the still centre of a moving universe, then a lot of things within that universe need to be guaranteed. On ITV, they've had some very good popular dramas over the last three years. Before that – apart from one or two like *Minder* – they didn't. But the BBC has always had quality popular programming; it has always had strong shows at weekends. And one needs to ensure that these standards are laid down, because there's no guarantee that any of the other broadcasters will do it.

It all sounds very much like an evolution, with more rigorous systems of programme appraisal, rather than a Year Zero – a major, Charter-renewal break with previous conceptions of public-service broadcasting.

I think you should be talking to John Birt or Patricia Hodgson, head of the Policy and Planning Unit, about these things. The Charter renewal stuff is still emerging. Distinctiveness may be a criterion, but it may not be the only one. And it's not just in popular programming that lousy shows turn up occasionally.

It seems to me perfectly compatible with the ideals of public-service broadcasting to give the public more or less what it wants in the early evening, which then frees resources and brings in an audience to allow you to do more challenging things later in the evening.

You seem to be proposing that popular programmes are synonymous with giving the public what it wants, which is a snobbish attitude to take, and one that's prevalent among television thinkers. The public doesn't know what it wants until it gets it – and you sometimes don't know what you're giving it until you have it. I passionately believe that a comedy series like *One Foot in the Grave* or *Birds of a Feather*, or drama like *EastEnders* or *Lovejoy*, is quality product.

And those expectations apply even to 'Big Break' or

'Every Second Counts' or 'That's Showbusiness'?

That's Showbusiness is a good show; it's quite inventive about what it does within the genre. Is there a problem in British television, particularly in drama, with getting things on air quickly enough? Clearly in the US, they can do it more quickly.

Drama, in particular, is a long process. If it's a six-part drama, it's likely to take a writer eighteen months to write it. I think there are a lot of downsides to the way it's done in the US. You find producers over there constantly complaining that they're never given enough time: suddenly, in May, the network will order a series, and you've got to make twenty-two episodes in four months. That's going from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Will increasing competition from ITV force British television more in the direction of that kind of Meccano, assembly-line television?

I don't think it has to. The problem in American television is that the competitive stakes are so high, and production costs have escalated so much, there's been a real narrowing of range. That needn't apply so critically over here. There probably will be a move towards longer runs of popular drama series, and there may well be a squeeze on costs that will lead to people having to make things more quickly and efficiently. I hope that doesn't drive television to a position where one-hour drama really only comes in thirteen- or twenty-two-part series.

Nevertheless, 'Casualty' is going to have a twenty-six-part run from the autumn. Is that a big change?

Twenty-four parts. It isn't momentous if you remember the history of television – the old days when *Dixon of Dock Green* and *The Brothers* used to be in runs of twenty-six. And I think there's a balance that people lost. We may be reinventing the concept of the long-run, one-hour serial for ourselves.

What does that mean for the writer? Will drama have to be less writer-led – more homogenised, perhaps more packaged around stars?

I suspect it will be both. Commercialisation and competition will lead in some areas to more packaging, but then anybody with an ounce of sense will realise that you've got to go on taking risks, to get people's passions on the screen.

Greg Dyke of LWT has said that he's not particularly in favour of risk-taking television. And Carlton TV has reportedly told its independents that it's looking for material that's 'TV Times' attractive for between 7pm and 10pm. What's BBC1's response to that?

I suppose I'm not sure what 'risk-taking television' means. The point about BBC1 is that it will continue to run all kinds of drama. It will have popular series; it will increase the amount of short-run serials; and it will continue to do one-offs. I'm not going to have a channel that's dependent on series, though I have great affection for the series – it's a critical part of British television. And series are important in creating an identity for a network. The greatest satisfaction in television is creating, or having screened, a popular series that is also undeniably a quality piece. That's why I love *Casualty* so much. Creating quality popular shows, whether comedy or drama, is the most difficult thing in

television. To do crossover shows that have big audiences – that's the Holy Grail.

When 'EastEnders' started, you said there was a "fabulous" amount of institutional opposition to it in the BBC. Was it similar with 'Eldorado'? How high up was the decision to go with 'Eldorado' taken?

With *EastEnders*, I didn't mean so much institutional as cultural opposition. The management decided to do it, and then I had to push it through the institution. With *Eldorado*, I told the board of governors, and the board of management was there, and everyone said it seemed a good idea. So I don't think there's an institutional resistance to it. And because it's commissioned outside the building, the people inside don't really have the chance to resist it even if they wanted to. But it's not just *Eldorado*: I was talking to the drama department within the context of a total investment of £40 million. So we were talking about a lot of other projects too.

What new styles of drama are you contemplating?

You once said that 'The Jewel in the Crown' had made the BBC rethink the direction of its drama. Is there anything similar happening now?

The point about *The Jewel in the Crown* is that it was the apex of a war of investment. With *Brideshead Revisited* (ITV) and *Tinker, Taylor, Soldier, Spy* (BBC) and *The Jewel in the Crown* (ITV) and *Bleak House* (BBC), there was a sense that the broadcasting organisations were piling money into these things and that they made the lower-budget programmes look less rich. So we said, "OK, we'll not continue with this pointless escalation: it's not good for television. We'll head off in a different direction, and do *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* and *The Singing Detective*". I think now we are considering swinging the pendulum back, particularly with ITV becoming an entirely commercial broadcaster. We've had *Clarissa* on BBC2, and I'd like to see on either channel more big-scale, beautifully made classic series. The other thing we're developing are larger-scale series from a single writer. So we're working with Gordon Newman (*Law and Order*), Peter Ransley (*Underbelly*) and Charles Wood (*Tumbledown*). I think the Grand Television Novel, so to speak, has been missing.

Do you get a sinking feeling that you're no longer playing on a level pitch with ITV, now that they can run a James Bond movie against 'Songs of Praise'?

It isn't a level pitch if you think of it in level terms. But if you create different criteria successfully, then you can win. If you stop thinking of winning only in terms of audience share over a week, and most importantly – and this is the most difficult thing in television – if you can meaningfully and convincingly convey the criteria to other people of all kinds, then you've succeeded. The old problem with television, particularly popular television, is that the people making up their minds about it don't watch it. Or when they do, they don't admit they've watched it. That does drive one screaming up the wall sometimes – to hear people not acknowledge the contribution and quality of a show like *EastEnders*, when you know very well that if their wife and children aren't watching, certainly the house next door is.

After the robotic future-shock of 'Hardware', director Richard Stanley, below, uncovers the disturbing legend of the serial killer, Nhadiép. Mark Kermode reports



BLOW UP A STORM THE MAKING OF DUST DEVIL

● Richard Stanley is obsessed by magic. Born in South Africa, where he attended the Cape Town Film and Video School, Stanley was introduced at an early age to the wonders of ancient religions by his mother, a feminist anthropologist specialising in witchcraft and tribal folklore. After fleeing South Africa in the 80s to avoid compulsory military service, Stanley came to Britain, where his interest in mysticism and the occult blended with the anarchic strains of apocalyptic post-punk pop culture.

Having collected a brace of prestigious awards for his short films *Rites of Passage* and *Incidents in an Expanding Universe*, Stanley started to make pop promos for groups such as Public Image Ltd, Pop Will Eat Itself, and Fields of Nephilim. A prolific scriptwriter and long-time comics fan, Stanley used pop-promo shoots as an apprenticeship for his subsequent work on feature films, learning how to realise ambitious visuals on tight schedules and even tighter budgets. Yet despite his success in the field, Stanley's respect for the pop-promo medium is limited: "I'm sort of a believer in the idea that music doesn't really need visuals", he confesses.

"I could never escape the fact that videos are ultimately superfluous. If the song's good, you don't need a video for it. But it was a great discipline, because pop-promo shoots usually consist of one day's frantic running around, and you're under enormous pressure, with all those different people telling you what to do: the band's manager; the band; the bank manager;

the record company; all of them. So you learn how to work fast, and how to deal with people. When you're doing student movies, you just don't get that training."

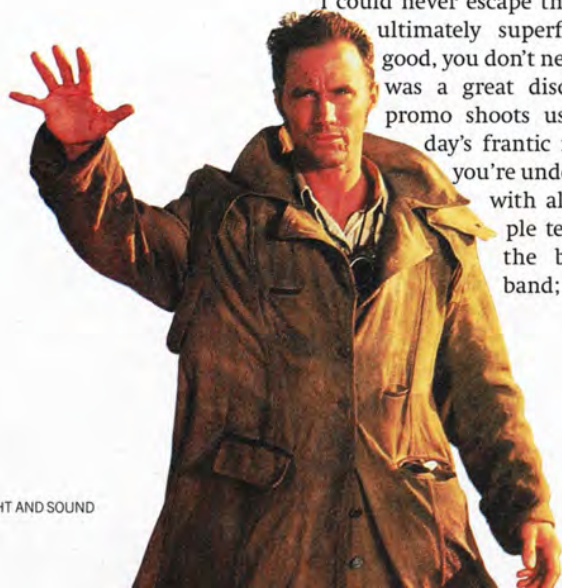
Stanley's first feature film, *Hardware* (1990), was a robotic nightmare set amid a self-destructing future, and packed full of apocalyptic imagery, hallucinogenic dream sequences and bizarre Biblical references. It was made for £1 million, an extremely low sum for a high-tech movie laden with special effects. Yet despite its tight budget, *Hardware* was extraordinarily successful, grossing over \$70 million worldwide, and garnering quotable plaudits from such established genre maestros as Wes Craven (creator of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*) and Italian horror king Dario Argento.

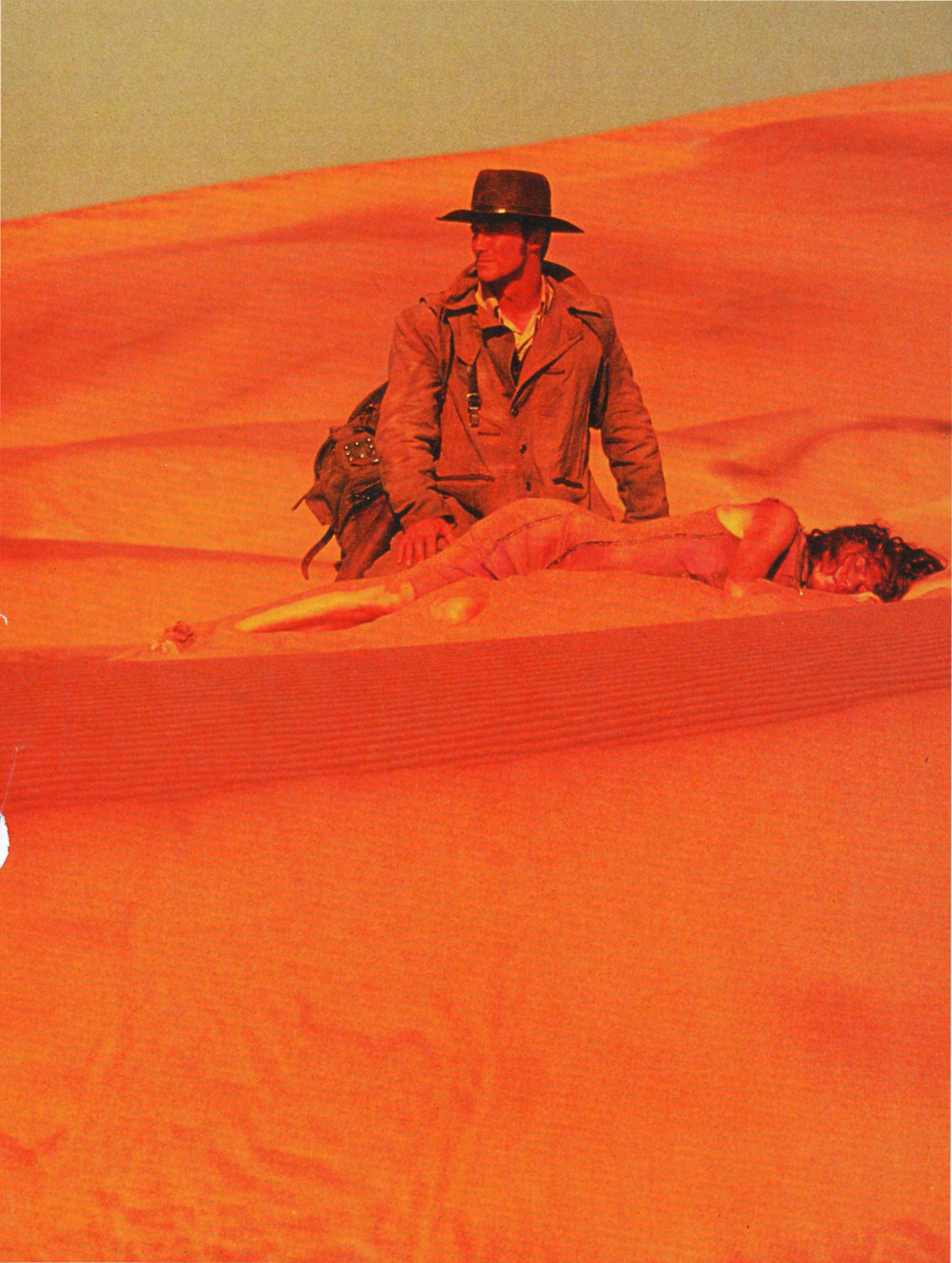
Once again, Stanley remains cynical about his success. "*Hardware* was deliberately put together as a designer movie, and I made it to prove that I could work fast", he says dismissively. "After having had various scripts rejected by producers, I said 'OK, what do you want?' Then I sat down and tried to write something which had an android in it, was set in the future, had American leads, baseball bats, chainsaws, a shower scene, gas explosions, a cliff-hanger scene, and so on. I wouldn't make a movie as obviously commercial as *Hardware* again. In fact, I felt a little ashamed that, having gone to all that trouble, what I ended up with was just a reasonable *Alien-Terminator* rip-off. *Hardware* is like a monster child to me. I don't know whether to be proud of it, or to reject it".

Although the *raison d'être* of *Hardware* was that it could be made cheaply, Stanley's second feature, *Dust Devil* (due for release in Britain in December) is more of a personal crusade. Turning down a lucrative offer to direct an adaptation of the *Judge Dread* comic strip under the guiding hand of Ed Pressman (for whom Stanley is currently remaking *The Island of Dr Moreau*), Stanley opted to pursue a less financially remunerative plan in attempting to realise his dream project. Shot entirely on location in Namibia, *Dust Devil* re-interprets the true story of a South African serial killer, known among locals as 'Nhadiép'. Drawing deeply upon the gothic literary traditions of Frankenstein-ian guilt and the 'divided self', *Dust Devil* is set within a haunting landscape which may be interpreted as psychological rather than as physical. Under the gaze of Stanley's camera, the swirling backdrop of the arid Namib desert (known traditionally as 'the oldest desert in the world') comes to incarnate the tortured mental states of the film's central characters.

Described by Stanley as "the archetypal South African horror story", *Dust Devil* has its origins in an unfinished 16mm student short which Stanley embarked upon after reading news reports of bizarre ritualistic murders taking place around the town of Bethany. "The ►

Hitch (Robert Burke) feels the teeth of the wind in 'Dust Devil', left; Wendy (Chelsea Fields) finds herself trapped with Hitch in a waking nightmare in the wilds of the Namib desert, opposite





On location in Namibia, it is hard not to feel infected by the bizarre atmosphere. Swakopmund, the seaside resort where the crew has been billeted for the duration of the two-month shoot, is a desolate place. Embalmed in a clammy fog for most of the time, it's a town which prefers to preserve its lurid German colonial history. Nearly two years after Namibia's independence from South Africa, plaques with the slogan of apartheid – 'right of admission reserved' – can still be found posted above the entrances of the Bierkellers and cafés where holiday-makers tuck into their Schwarzwelt torte. At one hostelry a makeshift sign seems to have been tacked up only recently. Meanwhile, in a dark corner of the local antiques shop, a tray of swastika and SS medals is discretely displayed. It seems easy to believe the rumours of Nazi reunions at a nearby hotel. More suburban than teutonic, the Kaiserliche is a hideous building – a mini-castle complete with turrets and battlements, and covered in white stucco.

An hour's drive inland and we are in the Namib desert, where most of the film is being shot. It feels like the beginning and end of the world – an arid place that plays strange tricks with the imagination. Strange indeed are the signs inscribed 'Devil' that mark out a makeshift road to the film set. At least they keep tourists away. But if the more inquisitive were to follow the signs, they would stumble upon a carnivalesque spectacle of caravans and tents pitched in the middle of a rust-coloured nowhere. Nearby stands an open-air cinema decorated with a wreath of circus lights and faded posters advertising 'The Exorcist' and 'The Bird with the Crystal Plumage'. The set is ready for filming the scene in 'Dust Devil' in which local policeman Ben comes to question the shaman Joe (John Matshikiza) about the murders. The scene is shot in the eerie glow of

the magic hour. The desert has never looked so bare.

For Stanley, the film's gothic style puts the nightmare back into the region's history. 'Dust Devil' is about the land of the 'Num' – the shape-shifter of Southern African mythologies – but equally about a land haunted by its colonial past. "Namibia is certainly a very peaceful country for an African republic", Stanley claims. "People are not living in fear here, but at the same time, the movie is equivocal about whether Namibia is just the last bastion of German conservatism – a refuge for Nazi war criminals – or a hope for the future and a model for a free South Africa". With 'Dust Devil', he hopes to tap into the mood of the country caught between death and birth.

To depict the conflict between old and new, production designer Joseph Bennett has built the few sets needed for the film from scratch, drawing upon the architectural style of towns like Swakopmund to create what he describes as a "hyper-real version" of what already exists in the region. For Bennett, the material was already rich with gothic eccentricity. "One of the striking things about Namibia is that it doesn't say Africa in terms of what audiences have come to expect Africa to be", explains Bennett. "It's a bit like Bavaria in the desert and certainly breaks all those 'Out of Africa' clichés". The German legacy includes such bizarre flourishes as the set of Struwwelpeter-style murals (actually decorating one house in the area) that has found its way out into the desert. It's a fitting detail: Struwwelpeter's tales of cruelty have much in common with 'Dust Devil'.

To use Namibia as a location became feasible following independence in March 1990. Stanley presented the script to his producer, JoAnne Sellar, with whom he had worked on 'Hardware'. With that film's commercial success, particularly in the US, Sellar was easily able to secure the £2.8 million budget for 'Dust Devil' – still a modest sum for a creatively ambitious

movie – from Miramax, Palace and British Screen. She was pleasantly surprised to find that David Aukin, the then new head of drama at Channel 4, also wanted to invest in the gothic horror film.

The script then went to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Namibia for approval. Pre-independence, the South African-ruled area had been a willing host only to exploitation movies of the likes of the Dolph Lundgren vehicle, 'Red Scorpion' (1989), which used the Namib as just another cheap backdrop: the generic desert and sand made that much more attractive by the tax shelters and army assistance the South Africa government lavished on international producers. Now it is possible for films to be made in Namibia that deal with the country's history. But while the fledgling country has as yet no film industry of its own, productions have to be financed from outside.

With the co-operation of the Film and Allied Workers Organisation in South Africa, Sellar was able to use South African personnel and equipment for the production. The crew is a combination of British, American, South African and Namibian, though all heads of department are British. The cast represents a similar mix. The lead roles are played by the American actors Robert Burke and Chelsea Fields and the black South African, Zakes Mokae. For Mokae, along with fellow-countryman John Matshikiza, the film marks a return to the region after years of exile in the US and UK respectively.

During the shoot, the two are understandably reticent about their homecoming – they both say that they are unable to nail their feelings with words. Later, travelling back in the bright sunlight to Namibia's capital, Windhoek, with Matshikiza, he seems somewhat relieved to be leaving the mists of Swakopmund. The actor and playwright's next stop is Yale, where he joins a working-party on cultural change in South Africa. I wonder what his Namibian tale will be.

ring John Hurt and Sean Bean. "That was a very different movie", declares Stanley, who is keen to distance his project from Wicht's quirky vision. "The explanation they came up with was that the killer was in the pay of white farmers to drive black people off their land".

By contrast, *Dust Devil* presents in the figure of Hitch (Robert Burke) a shape-shifting demon who seduces his victims towards a violent death. The plot of Stanley's script is simple. The land surrounding the town of Bethany is beset by murders with overtones of witchcraft and tribal ritual. Exotic mystical symbols scrawled in the victims' blood suggest that the killings have a sacrificial purpose. Investigating the mystery is Ben (Zakes Mokae), a disillusioned black policeman whose wife left him fifteen

years previously, following the death of their young son. Meanwhile, battered white suburban housewife Wendy (Chelsea Fields) walks out on her bullying husband, and drives off into the desert, heading inexorably (and inexplicably) for Bethany. En route, Wendy picks up Hitch, a mysterious traveller whom she finds both seductive and repellent. As Ben's investigations point ever more clearly to the involvement of supernatural forces in the murders, Wendy slowly uncovers the terrifying truth about Hitch.

According to Stanley, *Dust Devil* was not envisaged primarily as a horror movie, although it does have certain traits (shocks, jumps and occasional interludes of graphic violence) associated with the genre. "When I was making *Hardware*, overpopulation and environmental collapse were the most disturbing things on my mind", Stanley remembers. "Now, I think the most frightening things I can imagine come from my memories of South Africa". For Stanley, these haunting memories (which involve "terrible fire-arm abuse, serial killings, car accidents, people being strangled with barbed wire...") are born out of the twin evils of racism and sexism which beset South Africa, both of which Stanley addresses tangentially in *Dust Devil*. "Ben and Wendy are both searching for the *Dust Devil*, and their motivations are allied to what I felt were the greatest evils in South Africa", Stanley expounds. "These evils are the racial and sexual politics of the country, and when I was writing the script, I specifically chose Ben (a black policeman) and Wendy (a battered wife) to represent the products of these twin evils. South Africa is very big on wife-beating, women are treated appallingly, and there's very little women's liberation. When Wendy drives off into the desert, she's fleeing from her husband's assaults. Ben is the flip side of Wendy, one of those Gatsbyish characters who's actually been dead for a long time, killed by the destruction of his family".

As far as the visual character of *Dust Devil* is concerned, Stanley happily acknowledges the continuing influence of Italian *gialli* which is so evident in *Hardware*, but points also to an eclectic range of celluloid inspirations including Alexandro Jodorowsky's *El Topo*, Luis Buñuel's *Simon of the Desert*, Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, and Sergio Leone's 'spaghetti' classic, *Once Upon a Time in the West*. He also stresses that the rapid-fire editing and frenzied pace of *Hardware* are not characteristic of *Dust Devil*, which contains many languorous tracking shots which take full advantage of the breathtaking Namibian scenery.

"With *Hardware*, I had bits of a set and bits of a monster, and I had no choice but to use a montage of close-ups", he pleads. "At the end of the day, that was interpreted as a result of me being a pop promo-maker. Now I want to pull back and prove that I can do something very different".

◀ killer who inspired *Dust Devil* largely murdered migrant workers and railway workers", Stanley recalls. "The authorities couldn't catch him, and over the years a legend grew up that he was in fact a supernatural force, allied to the wind. Finally, there was a shoot-out in the Canyons, and the police turned up at the town of Bethsheba with the body of a man they claimed was the killer. But his head was entirely blown off, so no one could identify him. He's buried now in the mission town in a grave marked 'Nhadiap'. But there's very little evidence to prove whether that man was the killer or not".

The legend of Nhadiap has already served as the inspiration for another British movie: David Wicht's little-seen *Windprints* (1989), star-

Richard Stanley talks to Mark Kermode about his desire for an 'extended cut' of his film 'Dust Devil' to be given a chance in Europe

A CUT TOO FAR?

Following the gruelling shooting of *Dust Devil*, post-production began in London in early 1991. In December, Stanley delivered a 120-minute cut of the film, which was subsequently tightened to 110 minutes. Although it was understood that American co-financiers Miramax had the right to re-edit *Dust Devil* for distribution in the US (as had happened with *Hardware*), Stanley hoped that its British distributor, Palace, and British financiers would accept the 110-minute cut for release in Europe.

But this was not to be. Whatever the explanations (and there are various views), in late spring 1992, a version of *Dust Devil* running somewhere around 95 minutes was test-screened in Wimbledon to mixed reaction. "The audience was clearly confused", says Stanley, who attended the screening. "They had a hard time sympathising with the characters because many of the cuts that had been made affected the first third of the movie, in which the characters' motivations were explored". Following this screening, further cuts were made, giving *Dust Devil* a final running time of around 87 minutes, some 30 minutes shorter than the earlier cut.

In April 1992, financial problems at Palace led the company to go into administration, leaving *Dust Devil* temporarily without a UK distributor. Recently British distributor Mayfair has picked up the film, and, to add to its tortuous history, Polygram is rumoured, as we go to press, to have bought it. While the post-production history of any film is complex, what is unusual here is that the director is currently entreating Mayfair to consider releasing a special "extended European cut" of his movie. Indeed, so convinced is Stanley of the virtues of this proposed cut (of which only a grainy but impressive videotape currently exists) that he has offered personally to finance its celluloid reassembly to the tune of £40,000. "I believe I would be able to deliver a new answer print of *Dust Devil* for European release, which would run at between 110 and 120 minutes, and by which I would proudly stand", Stanley asserts.

Unlike the current assembly, Stanley's new version does not attempt to be a linear thriller. Portraying Hitch less as a flesh-and-blood person than as "an



entity which is simply a mirage", Stanley's cut focuses on the magical elements of the legend of Nhadiap, invoking tribal rituals, witchcraft and Namibian mysticism. Stanley's cut also pays more attention to the awe-inspiring Namibian scenery, conjuring an almost surreal vision of a timeless, dreamscape environment.

Tying in with this theme, the 'extended cut' features a number of hypnotic dream sequences which are not present in the current version. The director's interest in dream states was prefigured in *Hardware*, which contained depictions of drug-induced trances and nightmarish hallucinations. Unsurprisingly, Stanley claims that the dream sequences are centrally important to his cut of *Dust Devil*. "For me, *Dust Devil* is about magical reality", he explains. "The *Dust Devil*, or 'Night-walker', operates inside one's dreams and can therefore get to you when

you're asleep. So the dream sequences are just a continuation of the events in the movie wherein I can be more direct about the things that are going on".

The most startling dream sequence included in Stanley's proposed cut depicts Ben returning to the morgue where he previously examined a victim's body. "The body on the slab is no longer the murdered girl, but is Ben's son", Stanley recounts. "Ben's in-laws are present, and he tries to apologise for his son's death. But his wife tells him: 'It's because of you and your stupid pride'. Then, Ben cuts off one of his son's fingers. This is part of a magical ritual which is explained earlier in another scene which I would reinstate. In that scene, Ben's friend Joe tells him that he cut his fingers off as a sacrifice to the creator. So in the dream, Ben is offering a sacrifice to allow his son's spirit to pass on".

This sacrificial element is at the core

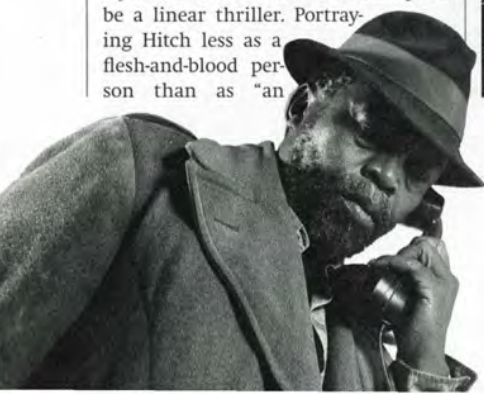
of the proposed new cut, as is the theme of suicidal guilt. Whereas the current cut portrays Ben primarily as a cop on the trail of a vicious killer, Stanley's 'extended version' presents him as a man desperately seeking his own death. This is achieved in part by the inclusion of the character of Ben's departed wife Katie, who appears to Ben in his dreams to taunt him about the death of his son. "Ben has been stuck in this dying town for fifteen years since Katie left him", explains Stanley. "His son was in the army and was killed in a border incident. But since black people don't get drafted in South Africa, the implication is that the son joined up to follow in his father's footsteps - he joined because his father was a cop. As far as Katie is concerned, she believes that it was Ben's misguided love of his country, and of uniforms, that caused their son's death. So Ben has been in pain for a long time and that increasingly solidifies into the feeling that he is looking for death."

"Wendy's position is slightly different; she's like someone who wants to drown herself, swims out to sea, then tastes the salt water and decides to turn back. But by then it's too late. The current is too strong and she can't get back to the shore".

"The idea in my version", Stanley concludes, "is that, just as vampires have to be invited into your home before they can take you, so Hitch can only take people who want to die. Both Ben and Wendy are seeking out the *Dust Devil* as an end to their pain; they are searching for death. To me, *Dust Devil* is about magic and suicide. That is the key to my version".



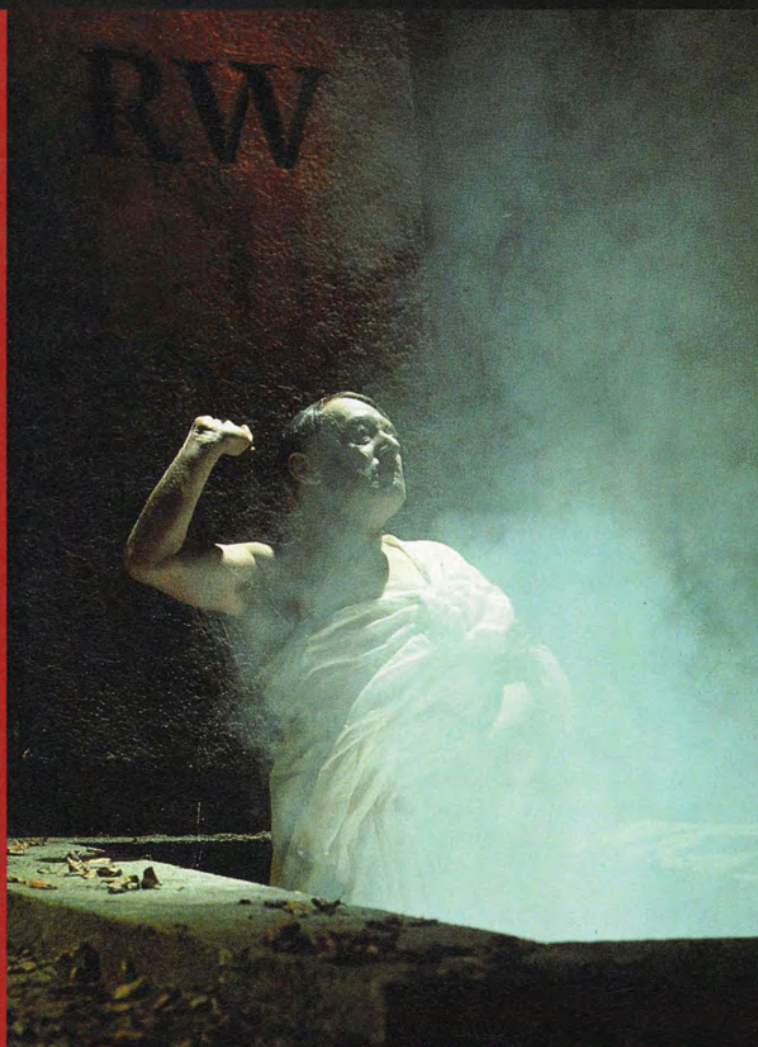
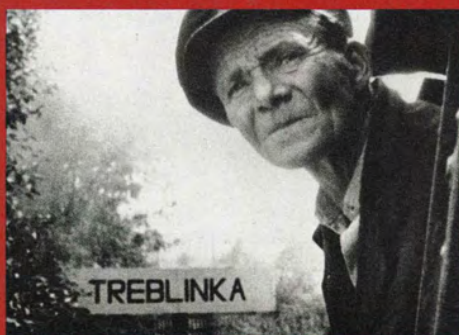
Top: Katie (Johanna Shiyagaya), Ben's wife, a central figure in Stanley's proposed 'extended cut'. Above: the mortuary dream, one of many hallucinatory sequences Stanley wants to reinstate. Left: Ben gets the low-down on the *Dust Devil*'s grizzly activities



Syberberg's 'Hitler' is one of several German films of the 70s and 80s preoccupied with fascism and its relationship to spectacle, argues Thomas Elsaesser as he explores films from 'Lili Marleen' to 'Heimat'

FILMING FASCISM

IS HISTORY JUST AN OLD MOVIE?



Spectacle and its discontents: the Wagnerian Führer of Syberberg's 'Hitler, a Film From Germany', above; the Polish train driver who drove Jews to the Treblinka death camp, from Claude Lanzmann's 'Shoah' above left; the massed cinematic troops of Leni Riefenstahl's 'Triumph of the Will', left

● It all started with *Cabaret*... Suddenly, the Third Reich had become a subject for feature films; in fact, for a while, it seemed to be, especially for European film-makers, the subject. Luchino Visconti's *The Damned* (*La Caduta degli Dei*, 1969), Ingmar Bergman's *The Serpent's Egg* (*Das Schlangenei*, 1977), Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist* (*Il Conformista*, 1970), Lina Wertmüller's *Seven Beauties* (*Pasqualino Settebellezze*, 1975), Louis Malle's *Lacombe Lucien* (1974), Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (*Il Portiere di Notte*, 1973), François Truffaut's *The Last Metro* (*Le Dernier Métro*, 1980), Joseph Losey's *Mr. Klein* (1976); the 70s were full of films exploring what Susan Sontag had termed "fascinating fascism". The combination of kitsch and camp, the cult of death and the ambiguous celebration of style which had made Nazi imagery, Nazi colours and iconography lead a second life – first in garish comics and then in coffee-table books – now surfaced in the movie mainstream, to join the growing number of novels, biographies and scholarly publications devoted to the period.

German directors were at first slow to take up the trend. For obvious reasons, the topic carried a special burden, not to be shouldered lightly or irresponsibly. But in 1976, after *Holocaust*, the six-part television series made by NBC had provoked unprecedented public commotion in West Germany, film-makers felt duty-bound to respond to or protest against what Edgar Reitz was to call "the Americans... taking away our history". In quick succession appeared Hans Jürgen Syberberg's *Hitler, a Film From Germany* (*Hitler, ein Film aus Deutschland*, 1977), Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (*Die Ehe der Maria Braun*, 1978) and *Despair* (1978), Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Germany, Pale Mother* (*Deutschland bleiche Mutter*, 1979), Alexander Kluge's *The Patriot* (*Die Patriotin*, 1979), Volker Schlöndorff's *The Tin Drum* (*Die Blechtrommel*, 1979), Fassbinder's *Lili Marleen* (1980), and finally, in 1984, Edgar Reitz's eleven-part *Heimat*. These are still among the titles most immediately associated with the New German Cinema, its identity apparently rooted in a brooding return to Germany's troubled past.

But clearly, more was involved than Germans claiming the right to speak up for themselves, and coming to terms with Hitler's legacy. At stake seemed to be history itself, and the cinema's way of dealing with it. What mattered, many of these films argued, was the subjective factor, the individual experience, with the cinema only truthful where it concentrated on the personal – on private, often sexual obsessions – while the public sphere remained a colourful but often clichéd backdrop. These German films tended to show how fascism had affected the (bourgeois) family, and family relations: especially mothers and daughters, mothers and sons; more rarely husbands and wives.

The realisation of a radical change in attitude to German and Italian fascism, to the occupation and resistance in France – or merely the fact that these films were very popular – spawned a number of theories, the most original perhaps being that of Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard detected in the general retro-fashion a distinct "retro-scenario": the peoples of Western Europe, locked into political stasis, nostalgically imagine through the cinema a time where their coun-

try's history still meant individual villains and victims, causes that mattered, and decisions of life and death. One attraction of such a history was the excuse for still telling stories with a beginning, middle and end, which would give the illusion of a personal or national destiny: a need fascism had tried to gratify on a collective scale. The return to history in the cinema was therefore for Baudrillard not a move towards coming to terms with the past, but the fetishisation of another trauma altogether, located in the present. Fascism is to the contemporary imagination what the ankle or laced-up boot is to the foot-fetishist – namely, the last permissible sight that can be possessed as object prior to the trauma barred from sight and consciousness: the absence of history altogether.

Baudrillard's thesis may well explain the orgies of reconstruction, of lovingly recreated period detail, the fixation on authenticity (the source of which turns out to have been a book of glossy photographs by luminaries such as Brassai or August Sander) that gripped the movie and television screens. Instead of history, we have an instant past of archive footage as action replay, and a media-made present of authentic sound, digitally remastered. After Vietnam, the war in your living room, terrorist hi-jacks for the benefit of television cameras, or the hard sell of US presidents, it seemed to Baudrillard that all the direst predictions of the May '68 situationists about the "society of the spectacle" had in fact come true.

It suggests that the cinema of the 70s essentially confirmed a melodramatic view of history: spectacular in the public sphere, a family soap opera in the home. For if Baudrillard is right, then even in films like *Heimat* or *Germany, Pale Mother*, the insistence on the family was something of a fetish, because it too clung to an unexamined notion of the authentic, of 'experience' as a quality that could be recovered and represented on film. Was *Heimat* really sixty years of *Neighbours* condensed into sixteen hours, or on the contrary – to use a term introduced by Foucault into the French retro-debate – an important part of the "struggle over popular memory".

Taking back neo-realism

What seemed clear was that reintroducing fascism as a film subject signalled the end of the European cinema's post-1945 dedication to 'realism' and a critical 'reflection' theory. Visconti's *The Damned*, Bertolucci's *1900* (*Novecento*, 1976), or Fellini's *Roma* (1972) had, in a sense, 'taken back' neo-realism – which, of course, in such classics as Rossellini's *Rome Open City* (*Roma città aperta*, 1945) or Visconti's *Ossessione* (1942) could itself be quite melodramatic. And with it went the Bazinian notion of what the morality of cinema was ("truth twenty-four times a second", as Godard put it, who, though, also knew two or three things about the difference between the real and media-reality). If one looks at the German cinema, one notices that a number of key films are in fact rewrites, pastiches or deconstructed remakes of other films. The once much-despised *Heimat*film became the generic basis for *Heimat*, but Reitz shows no rural, pre-industrial idyll, and instead makes much of the fact that his heroines go to the movies and his heroes dabble

with radio sets, take photographs and are active as cinematographers on the Eastern front.

In the case of Fassbinder, *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, for instance, quotes scenes from a ponderous but well-meaning Trümmerfilm of the late 40s (Harald Braun's *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen*, 1947), but it is also a take on Michael Curtiz's *Mildred Pierce* (1945) and a homage to Douglas Sirk's *A Time to Live and a Time to Die* (1958). Yet Fassbinder, apart from being an inveterate cinephile, also held a deconstructionist's view of the vanishing historical referent. The analogy sometimes made between his films about Germany – from *Effi Briest* via *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, *Bolwiser*, *Lili Marleen*, *Lola*, *The Merchant of Four Seasons* to *The Third Generation* and *In a Year with 13 Moons* he covered virtually every decade between 1890 and 1980 – and Balzac's *Comédie humaine* is only apt if one allows for the fact that his ambition to present all social strata and classes was no longer founded on the belief in the documentary character of the novel (or, for that matter, film). Fassbinder's Germany is one where rewriting its history means also rewriting this history as film history.

More particularly, Fassbinder's cycle of films about the 30s and 40s tends to foreground those aspects of Nazism which make it a subject for film-making. The connection between fascism and show business, for instance, appears to be the implicit (critical) perspective in *Lili Marleen*, *Lola* and *Veronika Voss* (*Der Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss*, 1981). What emerges from these films is that cinema can deal most effectively with history, where this history has made its pact, on a grand scale, with make-believe, deception and self-deception. Fassbinder's characters are caught up in show business and the entertainment world, or they take drugs – which contrasts sharply with the films about ordinary folk (or 'the personal as political') under fascism (*Heimat*, *Germany, Pale Mother*), but also differs from the film noir atmosphere with which some of the immediate post-war films wanted, rather naively, to 'expose' the evils of the political system, enmeshing individuals in guilt, crime or madness (see Wolfgang Staudte's *The Murderers Are Among Us*; *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, 1946).

Lili Marleen was not the first film to break the post-1945 taboo of representing fascism as spectacle, and therefore involved with desire, pleasure, libido. However, of all the films that in the 70s and early 80s had fascism as their subject (including those made in Italy and France), it was *Lili Marleen* that took furthest the alignment of fascism and show business, seeing Nazism as a 'modern', self-consciously political organisation of mass entertainment. By splicing together in one narrative the Second World War and the buoyant entertainment industry of radio and the phonograph, via a female star performer and patriarchal Oedipal melodrama, Fassbinder focuses on the transformation of totalitarian power into a spectacle redolent of cinematic fascination, showing how 'hard' military and logistical power is commuted into erotic glamour, by way of three related themes: mobilisation of the masses, the productivity of a war machine, and the consumption of spectacle. The staging of immediacy and presence, symbolised by the song of the title being performed, recorded, ►

◀ played over and over again, erases the boundary between the material and the immaterial, so that the reality of hunger and deprivation gives way to the intoxication of seeing technology in action. Not coercion, but the war machinery side by side with the technology of sound and image reproduction is the drug that keeps the population vital and productive.

Syberberg's 'Hitler, a Film From Germany'

The reason I bring up Fassbinder is that in *Lili Marleen*, fascism is shown as a form of show business, which exploits for its own ends the capacity of a popular song (and by extension, of popular culture) to arouse intense emotion in millions of individuals, and to act as a mirror of their subjective longing and of collective utopia: in this case, as it happens, a song about loss and death. Fassbinder here implicitly replies to Syberberg's *Hitler, a Film From Germany*, where the proposition that modern show business is in some sense more fascist than Nazism informs much of the argument by which the Hollywood cinema and Hitler are bracketed together. For one of Syberberg's central points is that the Nazi deployment of radio broadcasts, live transmissions, mass rallies and civilian mobilisation campaigns turned the state into a twelve-year state-of-emergency, experienced by many Germans as communality, participation and direct address (a notorious complaint by disgruntled citizens in the 50s was that 'in the old days, under Adolf, there was always something going on').

That the cinema has an especially ambivalent role in the representation of Nazism derives not least from the fact that German fascism has left a more complete account, in sight and sound, in visual records and in staged celebrations, of itself and its version of history than any previous regime. But Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*, 1936) is not so much the record of the 1934 National Socialist Party congress in Nuremberg as its visual, dramatic, aural *mise en scène* in action. What allows the ambivalence and fascination emanating from this film to survive all ideological deconstructions of its message is that through television, one has come to live with its underlying aesthetics: that public events are often staged, that news is made rather than simply happens, that public life is a photo-opportunity. In this respect, Syberberg's ironic pastiche provides a problematic, but also apt reflection on the wider relationship between history and the cinema, for he points to the surplus meaning carried by any audio-visual or photographic record when used in film as (self-) 'evidence'. Syberberg's point is that Hollywood cinema and now television, in the name of democracy and the right to consume, have made the Riefenstahl aesthetic the international norm: a perpetual festival of there-ness, action, live-ness, where spectacles of destruction, or feats of prowess and the body beautiful, feed national or individual fantasies of omnipotence.

While *Hitler, a Film From Germany*, as part of a trilogy, also continues Syberberg's theme of false prophets and false prophecies, which to him characterise the cycles of German history, his concern is not just Germany. If the Nazi ideology of *Volk* and *Lebensraum* could only gain credibility because radio was able to put on a daily elec-

tronic simulacrum of 'The People United behind the Führer', it was not a lesson lost on post-war political leaders. There is thus for Syberberg a continuity between fascism and the modern entertainment business, precisely because he sees a continuity between one kind of capitalism trying to solve its crisis by building up a war economy, and another kind of capitalism trying to solve its crises by enticing people to buy, spend and consume. What in fascism is the will towards self-representation (perversely, the anticipated promise of genuine democracy) has in post-war societies become the narcissism of the consumer. In consolidating the mirroring structures of spectacle, and making them invisible, cinema has played a crucial role in bringing about such a transformation. The show is democracy's tribute to totalitarianism, not only because the past can be revived by becoming a movie, but because individual or collective experience is no longer to be passed on other than as an object of consumption, in the visual system of identification, projection, mirroring and doubling that is the cinema and television.

Such a bleak message certainly seems to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Nonetheless, with hindsight, *Hitler, a Film From Germany* is recognisable as the high-water mark of a certain post-'68 anti-Americanism, while the critique of Hollywood can also be found in Godard's demand for "two or three Vietnams, in the heart of the Hollywood-Mosfilm-Cinecitta-Pinewood Empire", or in the British avant-garde's calls for a 'cinema of unpleasure'.

The return of the mummy complex?

Yet it is perhaps the unmitigated pessimism about the Holocaust having been forgotten because of *Holocaust* which makes Syberberg's film itself a historical document. Fortunately (one is tempted to say) what happened in Germany, and in the name of Germany between 1933 and 1945, is still so incomprehensible, so far from being settled, that the questions – what led up to it, how it was possible, how it still affects Europe – refuse to go away. Almost every week, there is a documentary on television which reminds us not only of Josef Mengele and his Auschwitz research programme on identical twins, the 'forgotten Holocaust' of south-east European gypsies, the John Demjanuk trial, alleged Nazi war criminals in Scotland, but also of the collusions and the compromises: the 'British betrayal' of the Cossacks in Yugoslavia, the Red Cross' refusal to act on information about the death camps, or Tom Bower's documentary about the 'Operation Paperclip' which in 1945 spirited Werner von Braun and other leading Nazis from the V2 rocket research centre in Peenemünde to Mexico, and from there into the top echelons of NASA, the US space programme.

In many of these films, it is not the wealth of visual material that is surprising, but how much is still hidden in archives, in the interstices of secretive bureaucracies, but also, how many men and women are still alive, willing to speak and give testimony, not always to their advantage. Above all, one thinks of Marcel Ophüls and *Le Chagrin et la pitié* (1971), *The Memory of Justice* (1975), *Hotel Terminus* (1988), where each time,

Ophüls turns his camera and microphone on people whose self-deception is rivalled only by their self-importance. He also turns himself into a character, not afraid of playing the clown, or of having a door slammed in his face like a travelling salesman. Dissimulating his own feelings and convictions, in order to make (some minor protagonist of) history 'speak', he likes to compare himself to Columbo, the awkwardly stooping detective, and indeed, there seems no end to the conspiracies and turpitudes still needing to be 'uncovered'.

Rather than regretting that so much personal or public history has vanished into its representations, into family snaps and archive footage, some film-makers seem to welcome this fact, because it has renewed their faith in cinema. Syberberg, for instance, has found in his rejection of narrative and realism a whole new aesthetic of cinema, neither fiction nor documentary, neither enacted drama nor talking heads, but back-projections and stage props, dolls, dummies and soloquists. Ophüls and others have gone out to find the 'authentic' voices that speak to the images we may have seen too many times. Still others create out of the very absence of evidence an overwhelming presence of history.

One of the consequences of living in an image world is that these images that connote 'history' have taken on not only a new solidity, an almost immutable reality in their own right. Whoever deals with them takes on a new kind of responsibility, if necessary, to show what they do not show. The dilemma is nowhere more starkly in evidence than in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985). The dialectic of material and immaterial, of who speaks and who is silenced in an image, becomes here the very core of the enterprise. Lanzmann's care over bureaucratic detail, the exact description of place and circumstance, the way he goads the memory of surviving prisoners, guards of concentration camps and farmers who merely looked on, suspend all preconceived narratives and explanations. *Shoah* does not invalidate them, nor does it complement them. Instead, Lanzmann confronts us with the sheer enormity of the numbers of victims and their total disappearance, even in the minds of those who helped or were present at their death. Appalled and intrigued by the industrial scale and methods used, one is also overwhelmed by the particularity and physicality of annihilation, pondering how little survives of a life compared to the mass of data, information, administration – truths not preserved in political, economic or even psychological discourses about the 'Final Solution'. In the end, the dead defy any viewer to imagine a history that could contain the palpable reality of their death, but also spurn the notion that film or photographs might somehow preserve their memory or signify their lives. It is a sobering reflection, that among the many ways humankind has tried to prolong and preserve life beyond death, the cinematographic might not be the worst. So much for Bazin's 'mummy complex'.

In other words, does the cinema have a conscience? Not so much about the Holocaust and its history, but about its complicity and precise role in the dilemma of our media world, first

stated by Walter Benjamin – namely, the dialectic which makes the act of recording also an act of destruction, a Faustian wager: a memory, an experience, for a moving image and recorded sound. The problem with many of the discussions about cinema and history is that whether we talk about accuracy and authenticity,

about recovering the past ‘as it really was’, or whether we take the other side of the coin – film necessarily betraying the past to illusionism, nostalgia, and making of history an old movie – the notion is somehow that the cinema is merely the vehicle for conveying or containing something that has happened elsewhere. But the consequence of the dialectic of recording as destroying (the obverse being Kracauer’s ‘redemption of physical reality’) is that instead of imagining the cinema more or less accurately representing a reality or event outside itself, it is a historical force in its own right, and finally needs to be understood as such, which is both more and less than what is usually meant by ‘media-reality’.

Syberberg, for instance, explicitly refrains from restaging historical events in *Hitler, a Film From Germany*, and puts on a puppet show. Like Fassbinder, he, too, recognises no ‘outside’ to the world of showmanship, make-believe, or in his case, mass-media manipulation, in contrast to Reitz, who for much of *Heimat* still holds on to an unfashionable, but maybe for popular film and television necessary belief in historical recreations. By treating fascism and the cinema not at the level of the referent (how accurately can a film present fascism, its horror or seduction) but engaging with what the French would call their (technological, social) *dispositifs*, Syberberg and Fassbinder deserve credit for having drawn attention to one particular history of the cinema’s (and television’s) power potential: for creating a public sphere (‘mobilisation’) and for affective/emotional engagement (‘subjectivity’). Where they differ is in their estimation of whether this history is an inevitable one.

Eros and mourning work

One question I think all the feature films from the 70s ask themselves is this: why – despite everything we know – do we instantly recognise ourselves in the fascist self-image? It’s not so much that the clothes and hair cuts look sexy again, or that the pseudo-classical sculpture makes a perfect backdrop for modelling swimwear or sun-tan lotion. Thematized as sex and death in virtually all the Italian films, it is a fatal identification which in Fassbinder and Syberberg becomes a question of the cinema’s strategies of identification *per se*.

Fassbinder, as a director of the 60s and 70s, invites comparison with two other directors: Pasolini and Oshima. All three film-makers come from countries which espoused fascism as their way of ‘modernising’ a feudal society; all three took fascism as the historical key to understanding the formation of their country’s present, but even more so to exploring social marginality – in fact, their own subjectivity and sexual identity.

In the heyday of the New German Cinema in the 70s and 80s, film-makers such as Herzog, Syberberg and Wenders saw themselves as ambassadors of the good Germany

Although Fassbinder never made a film as direct as Pasolini’s *Salo* (1975) or Oshima’s *Empire of the Senses* (*Ai No Corrida*, 1976), he shares with them the conviction that one does not have to “believe in reality” (Bazin, again) in order to know that the historical referent can indeed be seized in the form of

resentment, hate, desire; in short, at the level of a psychic ‘perverse’ investment which can overturn the existing order: the promise of revolution... existential, sexual, and a long way from the quietist slogan of the personal as political.

In this respect their heir in the 80s is Derek Jarman, who in some of his films, most recently *Edward II* (1991), deconstructs class war and history (understood as the recording, remembering and passing down of certain versions of power and masculinity, and not others), setting against them the investment of sexual love, hatred and jealousy.

These very different film-makers – Fassbinder, Pasolini, Oshima, Jarman, Ophüls, Lanzmann – who care passionately about both history and the cinema, all share a kind of direct personal commitment, often one of anger, outrage, but also an aesthetic commitment, usually to a non-realistic, operatic or baroque style, even among the documentarists. For them, the cinema does have a morality – not of truth, but of representation, including the representation of loss or excess. There is no doubt that Syberberg, too, has such a commitment, which is both moral and aesthetic. He has called it *Trauerarbeit*, work of mourning. This Freudian notion (from *Mourning and Melancholy*, 1926) of working through the processes of introjection and projection when faced with anger or apathy towards a loved one after bereavement, was popularised in Germany by Alexander Mitscherlich. Mitscherlich had attempted to explain why so few Germans felt remorse after the defeat of Nazism. Historicising Freud’s concept, he suggested that West Germans suffered from a particular kind of self-alienation, the “inability to mourn”, which meant they were also unable to love, neither themselves nor others.

In Syberberg, ‘mourning work’ assumes, apart from its metapsychological meaning, an aesthetic dimension. Noting how it posits an active, conscious coming to grips with historical experience, on terms that imply a self-distancing, but also self-abandoning stance towards the ‘other’, in view of being able to acknowledge loss and absence, Syberberg conceived it as a direct counterpart to the processes of primary narcissism and identification, whether with a political leader or a movie star. As a consequence, his films eschew filmic space, and set up associations, networks of cultural references, emblems, historical signposts and musical echoes which appeal to memory and conscious recognition. This opposition between ‘mourning work’ on the one hand, and the unconscious identification-projection mechanisms of the classical fiction film on the other, structures all his films, and ultimately determines the kind of role he sees for his cinema as a counter-cinema, sketch-

ing a poetics of plastic toys, image debris, clichés, quotations that is inspired by Benjamin’s book on baroque tragedy, itself influenced by the surrealists.

But *Trauerarbeit* became a catchword among German directors making films about history, not least because it could be connected to an elegaic tradition in German intellectual culture, especially since Hölderlin and the Romantics. *Hitler, a Film From Germany* makes one of these elegaic mourning works explicit: a section is named after Heinrich Heine’s ‘Deutschland ein Wintermärchen’, a satirical poem written from exile in Paris in 1844, on the eve of yet another failed German revolution. *Trauerarbeit*, in this tradition, signals the particular love-hate relationship of German post-war writers and film-makers towards the Federal Republic, which they felt alienated from, but nevertheless represented, especially abroad.

In its heyday in the 70s and 80s, international spokesmen of the New German Cinema like Herzog, Syberberg and Wenders saw themselves as just such ambassadors of the good Germany, often taking the moral high ground. They did public penance if and when required, and on occasion were not afraid to bite the hand that fed them (the Bonn government and its film-funding system). However, this right of the (literary and film) authors to speak on behalf of Germany and German history now appears to have been one of the casualties of unification. A complex process of reassessment has begun, perhaps not yet of German history, but of some of those who have been its artistic custodians. With it, the idea of *Trauerarbeit* itself as an authentic stance of both separation and engagement now sounds hollow, whingeing: not least because it over-values the political importance of the aesthetics of moral rectitude. Abroad, snickering remarks can be heard about the ‘world-record holders of breast-beating self-accusation’, while in Germany, some cultural high-priests of yesterday are openly being referred to as ‘harmless nut-cases’. The populace, it seems, is not in the mood for being schoolmastered: not by its politicians, not by its press and television, and least of all by its state-financed avant-garde film-makers. Syberberg, who has played the part also in a number of books, has had to endure his share of ridicule.

“Die Schuld lassen wir uns nicht nehmen” (“we won’t let them take away our guilt”). Thus read the caption to a West German cartoon of Chancellor Kohl laying a wreath at a concentration camp memorial. It maliciously echoes Edgar Reitz’s phrase “they’re taking away our history”. At a time when history has returned to Germany and places its own kind of burden on the future, while the legacy of Nazism in Croatia, Serbia and elsewhere has to be confronted by the whole of Europe, it cannot possibly be ‘our history’, just as it need not only be ‘our mourning work’. If making spectators identify with the ‘other’ is finally the goal of every director, it remains to be seen how German film-makers come to represent to Germans the kinds of otherness of a common history.

‘Hitler, a Film from Germany’ opens at the ICA in London on 4 September and is reviewed on page 49 of this issue



Why could the Germans never properly honour Marlene Dietrich, even after her death? What made them so uneasy about the star who proudly flaunted her Prussian heritage? Gertrud Koch explains

DIETRICH'S

DESTINY

The unification of East and West Germany, which ushered in the last decade of the twentieth century, was followed by two remarkable events that brought Berlin back into the limelight. The mortal remains of two famous Prussians were to be returned to their native soil: Frederick the Great (1712–1786) and Marlene Dietrich (1901–1992).

'Old Fritz' might have been dead for over 200 years, but he lived on in popular memory in the dual incarnations of the strong military leader who fought tooth and nail to defend the conquests made at the beginning of his reign, and as an *homme de lettres*, musician and correspondent of Voltaire. During the Second World War, his remains were transferred to a safe place as a 'national monument', and were then stored in the West for safe-keeping during the Cold War. Their ceremonial return to Sanssouci Castle in Berlin was staged like a set from Disneyworld, with a nineteenth-century railway train carrying his remains chugging its way through the reunited German lands.

The same firm of undertakers who transported Frederick back to Berlin feet first was also responsible for the interment of Marlene Dietrich. Both celebrities enjoy a definite, if different, place in the political symbolism of German culture, with a common low point between 1933 and 1945, when Frederick featured largely on the cinema screens of the Nazi era, played chiefly by Otto Gebühr, as the great advocate of tenacity on the battlefield, while Dietrich went over to the other side and became an American citizen whose first return to Germany was in the company of the combat troops of the American Allies.

When Frederick's remains were brought to Berlin as the 'common legacy' of the reunited German states, the event sparked debates about his desirability as a popular symbol, at least among critical historians who did not see the Prussian warlord as an ideal role model for the citizens of the new state. But unity seemed at least to ensure that the feared (or desired) reaction to the funeral was not too vociferous, and public enthusiasm seemed decently restrained. All the more astonishing, then, was the discord that accompanied Dietrich's burial. "The reactions to this funeral are extreme", an employee of the undertaker told Berlin's *Tageszeitung*. "Our company buried Old Fritz as well. But it wasn't like this. There have been ugly letters and threatening phone calls". When, to many people's surprise, she asked to be laid to rest in Berlin, next to her mother, Marlene Dietrich, who proudly cited the Prussian virtues as the secret of her success, who had never played down her origins in the family of a Prussian officer, was hounded to the grave.

Where have all the flowers gone?

The attitude of the people of Berlin to Marlene Dietrich – if not the attitude of Marlene Dietrich to Berlin – has been subject to much interpretation. Berlin's city council promised a dignified memorial and funeral service, at which it would be clearly expressed that it was proud to give the international star a final resting-place, and which would obscure the memory of the vituperative welcome given Dietrich

by the people of Berlin in the 60s. But the promised flowers – metaphorical and real – were missing. Admittedly some florists had ordered up large numbers of red roses, which they distributed themselves to passing mourners, but the public ceremony to which friends and fellow-stars were to be invited was called off at the last minute.

According to dissenting diplomatic statements, the reasons lay not with the Cannes Film Festival, which supposedly meant that the major stars were too busy to attend, but rather in the political arena. The vox pops included voices that still considered Dietrich a "traitor to her country", a star who had pledged allegiance to the Stars and Stripes and come back to Germany in an American uniform. The politicians hid their anxiety behind excuses about the lack of time for preparation, which were dismissed by the theatre management commissioned to stage the event. They complained that at the last minute the city politicians were simply unprepared to put enough money into the event, as the financial commitment would have required a greater degree of political legitimisation than German history was willing to bestow on the emigrée. In the end, in a form of political victory for the emergent right, it did not appear prudent for as much money to be spent on Dietrich as on the Prussian king.

Glamorous seductress

But why did Dietrich remain an effective political symbol for so many years? Why should she be regarded so ambivalently, despite the official desire for her merits as a committed opponent of National Socialism to be acknowledged? The few returning emigrés and politically active resistance fighters were treated after 1945 with suspicion and hatred, and ostracised. They included both Willy Brandt and Marlene Dietrich. To anyone who remembers the smear campaigns that afflicted Willy Brandt as Mayor of Berlin and Federal Chancellor, it will come as no surprise that Dietrich too provoked ambivalent reactions on her few visits to the Federal Republic. Her political involvement touched a raw nerve; she had, after all, taken sides against Nazism on the simplest possible grounds: that it did not take any great knowledge or insight to be opposed to a regime that gassed little children and presented the fact as a heroic deed – indeed, anyone who trusted his or her moral feelings could immediately see that this regime could not be right. When she fought beside the American troops during the war, she did so because she believed that all Germans were guilty for this war, and so felt obliged, as a German, to shoulder responsibility for it by standing side by side with the Allies and helping to bring it to an end as quickly as possible.

What Dietrich did was to highlight the incomprehensible scandal that the overwhelming majority of Germans, if they had not actively supported the National Socialist regime, had nonetheless condoned it. The fact that they had in the process broken fundamental rules of humanity and humaneness, a crime formulated by the judges at the Nuremberg trials, was given a new form in Dietrich's

RONALD GRANT



Playing with sex: Dietrich as Lola in 'The Blue Angel', both lascivious and motherly

◀ repeated reference to Kant's Categorical Imperative ("Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become universal law"), in a manner so plain, a child could have understood it.

One of the ideas current in the 50s, designed to make the fearsome learning-process psychologically easier, was of the entire, childlike German people in thrall to an all-powerful seducer whom they were helpless to oppose. And the fact that Dietrich, the glamorous seductress, had remained immune to Nazi offers to return to the greater glory of Germany on her homeland's cinema screens, and instead greeted the German Jewish emigrants from the studios in Babelsberg and the Berlin theatre with open arms, that she had remained autonomous in her political and human decisions, divided her more deeply than anything else from the German audience. Not only did she embody the idea of the 'better Germany' and a counterforce to the rigid marches of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, but also, unlike Riefenstahl, she was not Hitler's "relative being", almost his favourite daughter, but instead the ruler of a different Empire, with different needs.

Mother-whore figure

Prussia's martial fantasies are clearly influenced by an imaginary "topography of the sexes" (Sigrid Weigel): a pole of paranoid male purity, in relation to which women are grouped either as "relative beings" of the male (Sartre), their function determined in relation to him, or as exotic invaders and seducers whose sensuality is a destructive threat. Dietrich played a historical part in this projective topography of nations, races and sexes, and the coincidence of her departure for Hollywood with the rise of National Socialism turned her portrayal of Lola in Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (1930) into an image iconic of both memory and leaving: the image of a woman as openly sexual and lascivious as she is motherly; an image that died, along with the Weimar Republic, in National Socialism.

The intensity with which this image affected

contemporary viewers as a *promesse de bonheur* is readily apparent in reviews and descriptions of the film. It is no coincidence that Berlin's *Tageszeitung* printed a previously unpublished text by Franz Hessel from the 20s on the occasion of Dietrich's death. It contained the following passage: "Those dangerous women incarnated by Marlene Dietrich do not give one the feeling that they mean too much harm. As cheery Lola from the *Blue Angel*, she takes the schoolteacher's ruffled, bearded head in her kind and maternal hands, pats the cheeks of this man, so tenderly enchanted by her, as though he were a child, looks up at her poor victim with a bridal smile when he makes this supremely unworthy woman his wife, and smiles him his dream of pure happiness".

The strong maternal aura described by Hessel could only work with an image of motherliness that did not eschew sexuality. A highly ambivalent image, certainly, just as most of Dietrich's images are ambiguous, playing with sex without repressing it. In Sternberg's *Blonde Venus* (1932) she also plays a mother-whore figure, who becomes the projected ideal of her own son and of a series of other men. And later, Orson Welles works with the same image in *Touch of Evil* (1958): older now, and somewhat the worse for wear, she holds a cooking-pot in her shabby room with the same nonchalant expression with which she wears her sensational dress.

If we read, against Hessel's yearning description from the 20s, a post-war review of one of Dietrich's London appearances from a German-language newspaper, it is striking to note how strongly eroticism is now portrayed as betrayal, prostitution as business, Dietrich as an old procuress, as if a clearly pejorative attitude had to be enforced to counteract the ambivalence of the old maternal image: "To hear Marlene's 'whisky-tenor' and get a glimpse under her skirts, sent soaring by a sophisticated wind machine", complained a tabloid article, "you pay a good 1400 Schillings a ticket... Marlene, not only 'the most charming grandmother in the world' but also dazzlingly good at calcula-

tion, is well aware of this. In the end, her life was not led only for 'falling in love again' but just as much for money" (*Der Mittag*, 16 October 1956). These few lines reveal not only their hatred for the successful woman, but also overflow with anti-British and misogynist sentiment. The woman with the "whisky tenor" was clearly not a real woman (with a proper soprano voice); her appearance and charm were all calculated, a mechanical means of seduction from Britain's foreign shores.

Still so very German

Dietrich's discovery was not the secret sexuality of the mother figure, but an image of bisexuality which, counter to all her assertions, was part of her aura from Berlin of the 20s – in her performances with Margo Lion, for example. So it should come as no surprise that much of her audience throughout was drawn from various subcultures. That her funeral in Berlin became a catwalk for the city's transvestites transformed it into a lively affair, while her appropriation by the lesbian and feminist subcultures has sought to release her from the image of a female icon designed for the male gaze.

But the fact that Dietrich could be received in this way, regardless of what she might have thought of it herself, together with the ironically fragmented non-identity of her roles and portrayals, led to accusations of ambivalence in Germany. She might have been a star during the regrettably short-lived Weimar Republic; she might have been a star in 20s Berlin; she might always have stressed her German origins – but she did not become a German star in her lifetime: Germany had exorcised images of women like her from its culture at least by the time of National Socialism. And Marlene's homecoming, too, was ambivalent. What was at issue is not so much her motives and intentions, her identity or her career, as the internal constitution of the culture from which she derived her formative images.

When a German critic attending a concert by Dietrich in London during the 70s irritably noted that she was singing in German, he invented some adventurous constructions in which, drawing on his Prussian legacy, he experienced the sensuality of her aura as German, and interpreted its germanic qualities as a kind of 'catalogue of masculinity': "Whatever the case may be – since that evening it has been clear how incredibly important for Marlene Dietrich's authentic sound is that gutturally hard and sibilant language, the rhythm of those teutonic accents, the aggressive mixture of nuance and command. Perhaps it was only the exotic appeal of hearing the seductress of German singing – still so very German – that made the English audience rapturously applaud her German songs. More important to me was the certainty, both patriotic and depressing, that what Marlene Dietrich expresses in terms of melancholy, brazenness and corrupt pride, she can express only in the German language, and that every English version from 'The Blue Angel' to 'Where have all the flowers gone?' sounds like a thin copy of the wonderfully strong German original" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12 February 1975).

Marjorie Garber on
Dietrich as a lasting
index of star power
and gender crossover

STRIKE A POSE

● In the opening moments of Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel*, a complacent Professor Immanuel Rath (Emil Jannings) chirps hopefully towards a corner of his breakfast-room, cuing his pet bird into song. Receiving no answering chirp, he advances towards the cage, food morsel in hand. Sorrow and surprise cross his face; without a word he withdraws the body of the dead bird and hands it to his housekeeper, who receives it matter-of-factly and drops it in the fire. "No more singing", she says. "No more singing".

The death of Marlene Dietrich, the glamorous and seductive star whose international career as a singer and sex symbol was launched by *The Blue Angel*, has called forth eulogies and tributes from every corner of the globe. No caged bird, Dietrich gained her fame through a combination of good looks, good timing, wartime gallantry, unerring professionalism and an indefinable star quality. The singing itself was not so much the point – although *The Times* of London described her voice as "reminiscent of boots on crushed leaves", an image that suggests the elegant dominatrix she played to such effect in her cabaret scenes. Rather, her fascination lay in the entire ensemble: aloof, indifferent, unapproachable, self-knowing, not a sex object, but a sexual and sexualised subject, the narrative and enigma of sex itself. Critic Kenneth Tynan, whose appreciative words were cited in virtually every obituary, commented that "She lives in a sexual no-man's land – and in no woman's either. She dedicates herself to looking, rather than to being, sexy. The art is in the seeming". "She has sex but no positive gender", Tynan noted in his most quotable – and quoted – phrase. "Her masculinity appeals to women and her sexuality to men".

Tynan had an eye for cross-gender representations and their relationship to star quality and theatrical power. He once described Laurence Olivier's portrayal of Richard III as that of a "bustling spinster", and characterised Lady Macbeth as "basically a man's role", for which it would "probably be a mistake to cast a woman at all". But his appraisal of Dietrich has a particular resonance. "Sex but no positive [that is, determinative] gender". A "sexual no-man's land – and no woman's either". A "masculinity" that appeals to women, and a "sexuality" (not a



Confusing parts: Dietrich as nightclub singer Amy Jolly in 'Morocco'



The art of imitation: Madonna's homage to Dietrich in 'Express Yourself'

"femininity") that appeals to men.

Dietrich's reputation, Dietrich's image, is built on this structure of cross-gender representation. There is the nightclub singer Amy Jolly in *Morocco* (1930), who performs in top hat and tails, insouciantly kisses a woman in the audience on the lips, and offers legionnaire Gary Cooper a rose, which he tucks behind his ear. Then in *Blonde Venus* (1932), entertainer

Helen Faraday – because she is a devoted mother and, intermittently, wife – resumes her stage career and in effect 'quotes' her own performance in *Morocco*, although this time the hat and tails are light-coloured rather than dark, and the flirtation with women takes place onstage rather than off, as a slinky line of 'Arab' dancing girls makes its way past her and she takes one by the sleeve,

pinching her on the cheek, all the while waving her long cigarette holder in a parody of phallic power. In *Seven Sinners* (1940), the itinerant, incendiary singer Bijou dons a naval officer's uniform, complete with cap, epaulets and necktie, to sing 'The Man's in the Navy' to an enraptured crowd of officers, patrons and sailors. "Mister, watch your wife/The man's in the navy", she croons – and the seductive danger of the 'man' in question is posed, pre-eminently, by the cross-dressed figure before us, rather than by the officers to whom she is, deliberately and calculatingly, addressing her flattering words.

No wonder, then, that Dietrich became so quickly, and so completely, the index both of gender crossover and star power. She is quoted and copied everywhere, from mainstream movies to female impersonators. Her presence – or even her evocation – has itself become a sign of the provocative destabilisation of gender that is the very signature of the erotic.

In Luchino Visconti's *The Damned* (1969), for example, Helmut Berger in the role of the decadent Martin von Essenbeck appears as Dietrich in her *Blue Angel* role, complete with top hat, feather boa, garter belt and stockings, and the obligatory bentwood chair tilted back, scandalising his staid relatives at a family entertainment as he belts out a torch song about "ein Mann". When news of the burning of the Reichstag is announced, forcing him to break off his performance, he petulantly strips away his blonde wig; this is the first time the cinema audience learns that he is not a woman. Is Dietrich more "ein Mann", in the song's terms, than Martin? The film will tacitly test this out, at the same time as it will show the 'healthy' homosexuality of young boys in a Nazi youth camp. Martin/Marlene is made the signifier of perversity, not merely of sexuality. But then this has always been her paradoxical – and enigmatic – power.

Liza Minnelli as the wannabe-decadent Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* (1972), set in Weimar Berlin, straddles an identical chair, and brandishes her legs and her bowler hat. The stage show in which she appears, MC-ed by the sinister Joel Grey with his rictus of a smile, contains, as well as an all-girl band and a transvestite chorine, another, less predictable and far more offensive crossover representation – the 'heroine' of Grey's mock love song, 'If You Could See her with my Eyes', a bashful girl-gorilla in a pink tutu. (The song's punchline, a reminder of the anti-semitism already rife in pre-Nazi Germany, completes the refrain "If you could see her with my eyes... she wouldn't look Jewish at all.") Any Dietrich fan would be reminded not only of Lola Lola in *The Blue Angel*, but also of the famous gorilla suit in *Blonde Venus*, from which, in the course of a song called 'Hot Voodoo', the cool and incontrovertibly Aryan Marlene skilfully emerged.

Or consider yet another moment ►

◀ of screen homage, Raquel Welch's appearance as a transsexual in *Myra Breckinridge* (1970), Michael Sarne's over-the-top film of Gore Vidal's novel. As the seductive and meretricious Myra (formerly Myron), Welch appears in a naval uniform the twin of Dietrich's in *Seven Sinners* – and, in fact, is introduced in this regalia, to ensure the legibility of the quotation, by a clip from the earlier film, a few frames and bars of 'The Man's in the Navy'. The few frames are enough to disclose and (dis)clothe the difference between one 'man' and another: where Welch's Myra – now employed as a teacher of "posture and empathy" to aspiring actors she seduces and humiliates – seems merely campy, the compelling elegance and eroticism of Dietrich comes through even – or especially – in the grainy clip.

But perhaps the most effective recent homage to Dietrich has been that of Madonna, another 'blonde Venus' and mega-entertainer, whose name rivals the earlier singer's own for paradox, pertinence (or impertinence) and power. Maria Magdalena was Dietrich's given name – Mary Magdalene – a name she shortened to Marlene in part because her family objected to her going on the stage. Mary Magdalene, the whore with the heart of gold – and Madonna, the virgin, as 'hot' as Dietrich is 'cold', as funky as Dietrich is glamorous, yet each in her own way, and for her own time, cheekily, effectively seductive.

Madonna has over and over again quoted from Dietrich's great performances. The classic bentwood chair moment from *Blue Angel* is recreated as a solo porn peek-show for 'Open My Heart'. The double-breasted, man-tailored suit, complete with monocle and dominatrix disdain in 'Express Yourself' is the essence of Dietrich. Even the Madame de Pompadour hoop-skirt (complete with naughty ruffled panties) in which Madonna performed her 'Vogue' dance number for the 1990 Music Video Awards show quotes Lola Lola in her dressing-room – just as the song's lyric lauds "Greta Garbo and Monroe, Dietrich and DiMaggio" as icons of glamour for today's woman – and man.

A hit song of the pre-Madonna era that still resonates for fans and adepts of transgender performance tells the story of the singer's encounter in a club in London's Soho with a figure who "walked like a woman and talked like a man", "Girls will be boys and boys will be girls", runs the lyric. This 1970 hit by The Kinks was called – and was about – the erotic power of "Lola". "It's a mixed-up muddled-up shook-up world – except for Lola". The Lola Lola of the Berlin club called the Blue Angel is still very much alive, extolling the ambivalent and terrifying pleasures of falling in love again.

No more singing? *Au contraire*. See what the boys in the back room will have... and tell them I'm having the same.

Filmography

Marlene Dietrich

Born 27 December 1901, Berlin
Died 6 May 1992, Paris

Early films

Marlene Dietrich appeared in the films below (most of them silent) in small roles or as an extra in Germany during the 20s. Dietrich was very reticent in interviews about these films, dismissing them with such remarks as "They were not important" and "I didn't make any films before 'The Blue Angel'".

Der kleine Napoleon (aka So sind die Männer; The Little Napoleon) D: Georg Jacoby (1923)
Tragödie der Liebe (Tragedy of Love) D: Joe May (1923)

Der Mensch am Wege (Man by the Roadside) D: Wilhelm Dieterle (1923)

Der Sprung ins Leben (Leap into Life) D: Dr Johannes Guter (1924)

Die freudlose Gasse (The Joyless Street; US title: The Street of Sorrow)

D: Georg Wilhelm Pabst (1925)

Manon Lescaut D: Arthur Robison (1926)

Eine DuBarry von Heute (Modern DuBarry) D: Alexander Korda (1926)

Madame wünscht keine Kinder (Madam Wants No Children) D: Alexander Korda (1926)

Kopf hoch, Charly! (Heads Up, Charlie!) D: Dr Willi Wolff (1926)

Der Juxbaron (The Imaginary Baron) D: Dr Willi Wolff (1927)

Sein grösster Bluff (His Greatest Bluff) D: Harry Piel (1927)

Wenn ein Weib den Weg verliert (Café Electric) D: Gustav Ucicky (1927)

Prinzessin Olala (The Art of Love) D: Robert Land (1928)

Ich küsse ihre Hand, Madame (I Kiss Your Hand, Madam) D: Robert Land (1929)

Die Frau, nach der man sich sehnt (Three Loves) D: Kurt Bernhardt (1929)

Das Schiff der verlorenen Menschen (The Ship of Lost Men) D: Maurice Tourneur (1929)

Gefahren der Brautzeit (Dangers of the Engagement) D: Fred Sauer (1929)

Later films

After the success of 'Der blaue Engel' (which was reshot in English), Dietrich followed Josef von Sternberg to Hollywood in 1930. Dietrich became a US citizen in 1939.

Der blaue Engel (The Blue Angel) 98 mins D: Josef von Sternberg (1930) "I thought everything we were doing was awful. They kept a camera pointed on me here [pointing to her groin]. I was so young and foolish".

Morocco 92 mins D: Josef von Sternberg (1930) "They didn't like each other [Sternberg and Gary Cooper]. You know, he couldn't stand it if I looked up at any other man in a movie – he always staged it so that they were looking up to me. Cooper was very tall and you know, Jo was not".

Dishonored 91 mins

D: Josef von Sternberg (1931)

Shanghai Express 82 mins

D: Josef von Sternberg (1932)

Blonde Venus 89 mins

D: Josef von Sternberg (1932)

Song of Songs 83 mins D: Rouben Mamoulian (1933) "Paramount insisted that I do a picture with another director. Jo picked Mamoulian because he'd made Applause – which was quite good. But this one was lousy. Every day before each shot, I had the soundman lower the boom mike and I said into it so the Paramount brass could hear it when they saw the rushes: 'Oh, Jo – why hast thou forsaken me?'".

The Scarlet Empress 97 mins D: Josef von Sternberg (1934) "Today 'The Scarlet

Empress' is a classic. In 1934, however, it didn't enjoy its hoped-for success. But now we know that this film was ahead of its time... But von Sternberg didn't believe wholeheartedly in the film. Once he told the members of the cast: 'If this film is a flop, it will be a magnificent flop, and the critics will rage. But I prefer to see you in a magnificent flop than in a mediocre film'".

The Devil is a Woman 79 mins D: Josef von Sternberg (1935) "My favorite film and the most beautiful one ever made. Von Sternberg reserved the right to accept or reject what Travis Banton [costume designer] and I had designed, always subject to his instructions. We worked during lunch, between takes and late into the night. Travis and I knew no fatigue, perhaps because we adored von Sternberg".

Desire 91 mins D: Frank Borzage (1936) "'Desire' became a good film and, moreover, also proved to be a box-office success. The script was excellent, the roles superb – one more proof that these elements are more important than actors".

I Loved a Soldier D: Henry Hathaway (unfinished, 1936)

The Garden of Allah 80 mins D: Richard Boleslawski (1936) "I hated filming it. The ridiculous screenplay... everything

exasperated me. But when you are hired to make a film, you have to drink the cup to its dregs even if it's a bad one".

Knight without Armour 109 mins D: Jacques Feyder (1937)

Angel 91 mins D: Ernst Lubitsch (1937)

Destry Rides Again 94 mins D: George Marshall (1939) "It was fun to make the film, and we were all delighted with its great success. Joe Pasternak [producer] was especially happy, since he had challenged the film industry and saw that his efforts had been rewarded. After 'Destry', he made several other films with me. 'Seven Sinners', 'The Spoilers' and 'Pittsburgh' brought lots of money into Universal Studios' coffers".

Seven Sinners 87 mins D: Tay Garnett (1940)

The Flame of New Orleans 79 mins D: René Clair (1941) "Bruce Cabot was an awfully stupid actor, unable to remember his lines or cues. Nor could René Clair, who didn't speak a word of English, lend him a hand. He wouldn't accept any help. I finally resigned myself to paying for his lessons so that he would know his lines during shooting".

Manpower 103 mins D: Raoul Walsh (1941)

The Lady is Willing 91 mins D: Mitchell Leisen (1942)

The Spoilers 87 mins D: Ray Enright (1942)

Pittsburgh 91 mins D: Lewis Seiler (1942)

Follow the Boys (guest appearance) 114 mins D: Eddie Sutherland (1944)

Kismet 100 mins D: William Dieterle (1944)

Martin Roumagnac 99 mins D: George Lacombe (1946) "'Martin Roumagnac' was a disaster. The names Jean Gabin and



Rancho Notorious (1952)

Marlene Dietrich were not enough to lure moviegoers. I was crushed, as always when I felt I had failed to come up to expectations. My financial problems forced me to return to Hollywood to make a film – 'Golden Earrings'. The money I was paid was half of what it had been before the war. That too was a bad film, but when you need money you're ready to do anything".

Golden Earrings 94 mins D: Mitchell Leisen (1947)

A Foreign Affair 116 mins D: Billy Wilder (1948)

Jigsaw (guest appearance) 72 mins D: Fletcher Markle (1949)

Stage Fright 111 mins D: Alfred Hitchcock (1950) "Hitchcock filmed 'Stage Fright' in London when food was still strictly rationed. He solved the problem by having steaks and roasts flown in from America and delivered to the best restaurants in London, and then, after work, he would invite Jane Wyman and me to a princely dinner: 'Ladies must be well fed', he would say". Hitchcock on working with Dietrich: "Marlene was a professional star, she was also a professional cameraman, art director, editor, costume designer, hairdresser, make-up woman, composer, producer and director".

No Highway (US title: Highway in the Sky) 99 mins D: Henry Koster (1951)

Rancho Notorious 89 mins D: Fritz Lang (1952) "Fritz Lang was the director I detested most. I became conscious of my feelings towards him when we filmed 'Rancho Notorious'. In order to be able to work with Lang, I had to repress all the hatred and aversion he aroused in me. He despised my reverence for Josef von Sternberg, and tried to replace this genius in my heart and in my mind. I know that because he confessed it to me".

Around the World in Eighty Days (guest appearance) 175 mins D: Michael Anderson (1956)

The Monte Carlo Story 101 mins D: Samuel A. Taylor (1957)

Witness for the Prosecution 116 mins D: Billy Wilder (1958) "I made the most extraordinary efforts to become an ugly, ordinary woman who succeeds in leading one of the greatest lawyers by the nose. I applied make-up to my nose, made it broader with massages, and called on Orson Welles – the great nose specialist – for help. In the long shot in which I'm seen going along a railroad track, I have cushions around my hips and legs. I wrapped pieces of paper around my fingers to make them look as though they were deformed by arthritis. And to complete the picture I painted my nails with a dark lacquer... I felt close to the role of Mrs Vole. She's not only brave, but loves her man unconditionally. She is the kind of woman I like to play".

Touch of Evil 93 mins

D: Orson Welles (1958) "I think I've never been as good as I was in that little teensy part. I had a line at the end: 'What does it matter what you say about people'. I tell you it was beautiful".

Judgement at Nuremberg 183 mins, original running time 190 mins D: Stanley Kramer (1961)

Black Fox Documentary about Adolf Hitler, narrated by Dietrich, 89 mins D: Louis Clyde Stoumen (1962)

Paris When It Sizzles 111 mins D: Richard Quine (1964)

Just a Gigolo 105 mins, original running time 147 mins D: David Hemmings (1978) (Quotations from 'My Life' by Marlene Dietrich; 'Time Magazine' 15 January 1973; 'Esquire' January 1973; 'Dietrich' by Donald Spoto)

Cult and Classic from Connoisseur for September

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It became necessary to destroy the world in order to save it

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18

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U

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Sex and sexuality are the subjects of Chantal Akerman's movies. But in what ways is she a feminist film-maker, asks Angela McRobbie?

PASSIONATE UNCERTAINTY

● Chantal Akerman was only twenty-three when *Je tu il elle* was first shown. It marked the start of an interest in sex and sexuality which has stayed with her, and which is taken up again directly in her latest film, *Nuit et jour*. Akerman's films have been linked with feminism ever since the early 70s, when *Je tu il elle* (1974), followed by *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), were taken up by theorists and film critics as reflective of the new feminist politics. Her work was also seen as pioneering in that it seemed to herald the development of a distinctively feminist aesthetic.

Je tu il elle featured Akerman herself in three set pieces and was shot within a week on a tiny budget. The speed and intensity of its production work their way right through the film, from the first section where Akerman is seen obsessively eating from a bag of white sugar while contemplating the end of a relationship, to the second where she is sitting in the noisy front seat of a lorry, masturbating the driver, and finally in a scene of prolonged, convulsive love-making with a woman. It was indeed a spectacular debut.

Akerman's own relationship with feminism at that time, and particularly with feminist theory, was tinged with ambivalence. *Jeanne Dielman* was seen by several critics, including those from *Screen*, as visualising, in its use of 'real time', Julia Kristeva's idea of 'women's time'. Akerman disputed this, as she did the suggestion that the low level of the camera subverted conventional ways of looking. It was, she replied, much more to do with the fact that she is a very small woman.

It is difficult to locate the nature of these tensions with feminism outside the specific context of French feminism in the 70s and 80s. Akerman certainly resisted, perhaps rightly, the pressure to conform to the high political expectations that would be made of her were she wholeheartedly to represent herself as part of the women's movement. Of course it's all different now: as the movement has fragmented and diversified in terms of who it represents, where and how, there is not the same intense relationship between film and politics. That Akerman's path, from *Jeanne Dielman* onwards, has been singularly removed from the requirements of theory might have been a source of disappointment to her feminist audience. In particular, the recurrent references to lesbianism which find a focus in *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna* (1978), where the film-maker at the centre of the narrative tells her mother of an affair with

a woman one night when they share a bed and hotel room, were not developed.

Interviewing Chantal Akerman recently in London, she told us that feminism had not successfully entered the political agenda in French culture. "In France now", she said with a hint of resignation and frustration, "we don't speak a lot about women. Not since 1981. It's out of fashion". According to Akerman, political disillusionment has immobilised both the left and the women's movement. It is only around issues of race that there is any sense of political energy, with little sign of involvement from the older 'new left' or the women's movement of the 70s. In this environment, Akerman seems to be working in the same kind of chosen isolation as she has always done, with the help of a few collaborators and her long-term producer, Martine Marignac.

Looking back on her career, Akerman points out the continual disparity between the generous press coverage she has had from papers such as *Libération* and the small audiences her

films have attracted. To raise money to fund her films has always been a struggle, though she acknowledges that one of the advantages of working in France is that she usually "has a home" for her work once it reaches the initial stages. *Nuit et jour* cost £1 million to make – not a large budget, and with fewer people going to see films, and particularly independent films, she does not expect to make much from it. But in comparison with independent film-makers working elsewhere in Europe, and in particular in the UK, she is aware that she is "well protected". "Even those of us not working in the mainstream still have room to work. *Un Jour Pina a demandé* (1983) was commissioned by French television. There is also INA [L'Institut National de l'Audiovisuel] and the state television network is obliged to give space to what INA produces. So *Pina* came out of that space, and they also allowed me to do a piece about my grandmother".

How is the work of an independent French film-maker who produces films in a wilfully self-styled feminist aesthetic to be understood in the 90s? Cultural politics has moved on to more global terrain; the European avant-garde, which some might claim remains the home of a director like Akerman, is seen as representing a particular historical moment that has been thoroughly challenged and superseded; the debates of post-modernism have unsettled, if not undermined, the project of 'theoretical' film-making. Both the theorists of the 70s and the post-modernists of the 80s encountered obstacles in their desire to bring together politics and art. The search for good theory in film practice narrowed the focus of film scholarship, since so few films measured up to the expectations of theory, and in any case there was less and less money around to fund independent film. At its worst, the shift a few years later to endorsing a post-modern practice led to a neglect of all the feminist art, feminist film-making and other examples of 'serious' cultural production that did not fit that mould. More recently, artists and photographers such as Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger and Sherry Levine in the US, and in the UK painters like Therese Oulton and Rosa Lee as well as the photographer Mitra Tabrizian, have been applauded for successfully bringing together feminism and post-modernism.

But rather than explore the possible crisis in feminist cultural practice, or else the extent to which it does not fit with the overarching concerns of post-modern theory, there has been a



'Je tu il elle': a new feminist aesthetics



... and politics, in 'Jeanne Dielman'



After Godard: Akerman returns to themes of sex and love in 'Nuit et jour'

move instead on the part of feminist film scholars to a fashionable preference for reading the popular (the Madonna phenomenon) in terms of its account of gender relationships in the new climate of sexual politics. What this shows is the narrowness of the world of feminist film-making, and the close relationship between practitioners, feminist academics, and the university departments which act as cultural legislators. While Akerman's early work fitted exactly with the requirements of the new feminist film scholarship that took root in the 70s in educational establishments in the US and Europe, it is more difficult now to place her concerns within broader debates. This alone is evidence of many of the weaknesses in current theory. But it also raises usefully awkward questions for critics who have avoided the question of style and aesthetics and the autonomy of vision in feminist art practice: precisely the space Akerman occupies.

Despite dropping out of film school early on, Akerman remains the product of a certain kind of art-school education. Her films are adamantly 'hers', and what characterises them is a continuity and development of style and imagination, within a distinctively French tradition (with Godard and Marguerite Duras as long-term influences). One of the difficulties of looking back at Akerman's career is that she has been over-appropriated by so many different 'interest groups'. In France, her films attract the critical attention of psychoanalysts, who see in

them the repeated expression of a kind of pre-Oedipal femininity (lesbianism in this context is a retreat to a state of being close to the female, and hence to the mother). Feminists not working in the field of film theory emphasise her over-riding concern with mother-daughter relationships, something which Akerman says she has now worked through and left to one side, while at the same time feeling forever indebted to her own mother for encouraging her to have a career at a time when young girls in France were still being brought up to be housewives. Akerman is also looked to by lesbian-feminists, who trace in her films a turning away from heterosexuality and a continued concern with female sexual pleasure. And finally there is the Akerman whom the quality press in both Britain and France would interpret as the archetypal auteur.

Not surprisingly, Akerman has been seen as letting down some of these groups, some of the time. Perhaps now it can be recognised as a strength that her films sidestepped theory and, in a moment of didactic film-making, resisted the pressure to pontificate or indeed to be certain. The thread of uncertainty and ambivalence that winds its way through all her work, together with a kind of daydreaming, introspective femininity occasionally bursting through into passion or violence, are what characterise her vision of what it is to be a woman. For example, the underrated *Golden Eighties* (1983), about the very female experi-

ence of working in the fashion and beauty business, is concerned not with the more politically fashionable pleasures of shopping, but with the fantasies, stories and gossip that shop workers and beauticians wind in order to pass the long hours of work. Although the film possesses a whimsical, humorous edge, Akerman sees it as harshly critical of a world where work is repetitive and unrewarding, one which she experienced at second hand through her mother, who worked in a fashion boutique and who, according to Akerman, described it as a form of prostitution, of having to sell yourself in order to sell the clothes.

If fashion and the body play a key role in *Golden Eighties*, it is sex and love which Akerman returns to in *Nuit et jour*. It is a film which seems on first impression to be almost perversely conventional in its replaying of the heterosexual love triangle from which the female protagonist, Julie, eventually walks away. At points, the love-making is claustrophobic and familiar in its tracking of the young and flawless female body. The narrative is precious and yet familiar; the protestations of both men are too ardent, too much the traditional and perhaps outmoded 'language of love'. And even Julie's pleasure in both men is unsurprising.

From any other female director working in the 90s, it would be tempting to regard *Nuit et jour* as a post-modernist pastiche, an ironic idyll of love and romance viewed from a post-Aids, post-feminist perspective. But no, it doesn't quite work like this. Instead, it is a profoundly French film, paying tribute perhaps to Godard, and in its whimsical lyricism evoking a history of French cinema from *Jules et Jim* to *Celine et Julie vont en bateau* to *Une femme est une femme*.

Akerman has worked, at her best, with questions of female (and Jewish) identity. She is also, like Godard, a profoundly urban film-maker. If in her most recent work she is overwhelmed by a weak narrative (never her strongest point) and by the force of a national film culture to which she seems to be paying tribute, then, having paid her respects, perhaps we can assume that Akerman will in future return to a film-making practice that more successfully develops the personalised, semi-documentary style and urban images which she so wonderfully captured in her New York film, *News from Home* (1976).

Thanks to Martine Thoquenne for participating in the interview and discussion with Chantal Akerman. 'Nuit et jour' opens on 11 September and is reviewed by Angela McRobbie on page 54 of this issue

The self-styled 'New Queer Cinema' has arisen out of the long and important tradition of gay and lesbian film-making within the history of independent, experimental and 'outsider' cinema. But is there really something new happening? Are the aesthetics, the politics and the assertions really marking new voices and new directions?

This special supplement, the first major contribution to the queer cinema debate in Britain, opens with a polemical essay by B. Ruby Rich, originally published in 'Village Voice', that in many ways stimulated and summed up the first stages of a new and energetic movement. Will Bell, Arts Council
Philip Dodd, 'Sight and Sound'
Simon Field, ICA

ICA



NEW QUEER CINEMA

This supplement, supported by the Arts Council, complements the international conference on New Queer Cinema to be held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London from 18 to 20 September. It will also be available to conference participants as a twelve-page document. The conference is supported by the Arts Council and Channel 4.



Every dyke fan's dream narrative: Cecilia Barriga's 'The Meeting of Two Queens'



Putting the homo back into homicide: Tom Kalin's 'Swoon'

QUEER A

B. Ruby Rich introduces the arguments for a new queer cinema, together with the directors and films

Anyone who has been following the news at film festivals over the past few months knows, by now, that 1992 has become a watershed year for independent gay and lesbian film and video. Early last spring, on the very same day, Paul Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct* (1992) and Derek Jarman's *Edward II* (1991) opened in New York City. Within days, the prestigious New Directors/New Films Festival had premiered four new 'queer' films: Christopher Münch's *The Hours and Times* (1991), Tom Kalin's *Swoon* (1992), Gregg Araki's *The Living End* (1992) and Laurie Lynd's *R.S.V.P.* (1991). Had so much ink ever been spilled in the mainstream press for such a cause? *Basic Instinct* was picketed by the self-righteous wing of the queer community (until dykes began to discover how much fun it was), while mainstream critics were busily impressed by the 'queer new wave' and set to work making stars of the new boys on the block. Not that the moment isn't contradictory: this summer's San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival had its most successful year in its sixteen-year history, doubling attendance from 1991, but the National Endowment for the Arts pulled its funding anyway.

The queer film phenomenon was introduced a year ago at Toronto's Festival of Festivals, the best spot in North America for tracking new cinematic trends. There, suddenly, was a flock of films that were doing something new, renegotiating subjectivities, annexing whole genres, revising histories in their image. All through the winter, spring, summer, and now autumn, the message has been loud and clear: queer is hot. Check out the international circuit, from Park City to Berlin to London. Awards have been won, parties held. At Sundance, in the heart of Mormon country, there was even a panel dedicated to the queer subject, hosted by yours truly.

The Barbed Wire Kisses panel put eight panellists on stage, with so many queer film-makers in the audience that a roll call had to be read. Film-makers stood, one by one, to applause from the matinee crowd. "Sundance is where you see what the industry can bear", said panellist Todd Haynes, there to talk about *Poison*'s year on the firing-line. He stayed to be impressed by earnest eighteen-year-old Wunderkind Sadie Benning, whose bargain-basement videos, shot with a Fisher-Price Pixelvision and produced for less than \$20 apiece, have already received a retrospective at MoMA.

Isaac Julien was suddenly cast in the role of the older generation. Summarising the dilemmas of marketing queer product to general audiences, he described a Miramax Prestige advertising campaign for his *Young Soul Rebels* (1991) that used a bland image of guys and gals hanging out, like a Newport ad gone Benetton. Julien got them to change to an image of the black and white boyfriends, Caz and Billibud, kissing on a bed. The box office improved.

Tom Kalin struggled to reconcile his support for the disruptions of *Basic Instinct*'s shoot last spring with his film *Swoon*'s choice of queer murderers as subjects. Australian film-makers Stephen Cummins and Simon Hunt related the censorship of an episode of *The Simpsons* down under, where a scene of Homer kissing a swish fellow at the plant was cut. The panel turned surprisingly participatory. One Disney executive excoriated the industry. A film-maker called for a campaign to demand that Oliver Stone not direct his announced biopic of Harvey Milk (now being directed by Gus Van Sant, with Stone as co-producer). Meanwhile, Derek Jarman, the grand old man in his fourth decade of queer activity, beamed. He'd never been on a panel of queers at a mainstream festival.

Try to imagine the scene in Park City. Robert Redford ►

◀ holds a press conference and is asked, on camera, why there are all these gay films at his festival. Redford finesses: it is all part of the spectrum of independent film that Sundance is meant to serve. He even allows that the awards last year to *Poison* (1991) and Jennie Livingston's *Paris Is Burning* (1990) might have made the festival seem more welcoming to gays and lesbians. He could just as easily have said: these are simply the best films being made.

Of course, the new queer films and videos aren't all the same, and don't share a single aesthetic vocabulary or strategy or concern. Yet they are nonetheless united by a common style. Call it 'Homo Pomo': there are traces in all of them of appropriation and pastiche, irony, as well as a reworking of history with social constructionism very much in mind. Definitely breaking with older humanist approaches and the films and tapes that accompanied identity politics, these works are irreverent, energetic, alternately minimalist and excessive. Above all, they're full of pleasure. They're here, they're queer, get hip to them.

All the same, success breeds discontent, and 1992 is no different from any other year. When the ghetto goes mainstream, malaise and paranoia set in. It can be ideological, or generational, or genderational. Consider the issues that might disturb the peace. What will happen to the lesbian and gay film-makers who have been making independent films, often in avant-garde traditions, for decades already? Surprise, all the new movies being snatched up by distributors, shown in mainstream festivals, booked into theatres, are by the boys. Surprise, the amazing new lesbian videos that are redefining the whole dyke relationship to popular culture remain hard to find.

Amsterdam's Gay and Lesbian Film Festival made these discrepancies plain as day. The festival was staged last November, wedged between Toronto and Sundance. It should have been the most exciting place to be, but wasn't, not at all. And yet, that's where the girls were. Where the videos were. Where the films by people of colour and ex-Iron Curtain denizens were. But the power brokers were missing.

Christine Vachon, co-producer of *Swoon* and *Poison*, is sure that the heat this year has been produced by money: "Suddenly there's a spotlight that says these films can be commercially viable". Still, everyone tries to guess how long this moment of fascination will last. After all, none of this is taking place in a vacuum: celebrated in the festivals, despised in the streets. Review the statistics on gay-bashing. Glance at would-be presidential candidate Pat Buchanan's demonising of Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied*. Check out US immigration policy. Add the usual quota of internecine battles: girls against boys, narrative versus experimental work, white boys versus everyone else, elitism against populism, expansion of sights versus patrolling of borders. There's bound to be trouble in paradise, even when the party's just getting going.

Dateline: Toronto

Music was in the air in Toronto in September 1991, where the reputation of queer film and video started to build up. Or maybe I just loved



Last tango in Barcelona: Münch's 'The Hours and Times'

Laurie Lynd's *R.S.V.P.* because it made my elevator ride with Jessye Norman possible. Lynd's film uses Norman's aria from Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été* as its madeleine – supposedly Lynd sent Norman the finished film as a belated form of asking permission, and she loved it so much she agreed to attend the world premiere at Toronto (with red carpet in place and a packed house going wild, she sat through the screening holding Lynd's hand). *R.S.V.P.* suggests that the tragedy and trauma of Aids have led to a new kind of film and video practice, one which takes up the aesthetic strategies that directors have already learned and applies them to a greater need than art for its own sake. This time, it's art for our sake, and it's powerful: no one can stay dry-eyed through this witty elegy.

Lynd was there as a producer, too, having worked on fellow-Canadian John Greyson's *The Making of 'Monsters'*. In it, George Lukács comes out of retirement to produce a television movie and hires Bertolt Brecht to direct it. Along with the comedy and boys in briefs, there's a restaging of the central aesthetic argument of the Frankfurt School as it might apply to the crises of representation engendered by today's anti-gay backlash, violence, and television treatments of the Aids era.

Both low-budget and high-end film-making showed up in Toronto. Not surprisingly, the guys were high end, the gals low. Not that I'd begrudge Gus Van Sant one penny or remove a single frame from *My Own Private Idaho* – a film that securely positions him as heir-apparent to Fassbinder. So what if it didn't get a single Oscar nomination? At the other end of the spectrum was veteran avant-gardist Su Friedrich, whose latest film, *First Comes Love*, provoked catcalls from its largely queer audience. Was it because its subject was marriage, a topic on which the film is healthily ambivalent, mingling resentment with envy, anger with yearning? Or was it an aesthetic reaction, since Friedrich returns to a quasi-structuralist mode for her indictment of institutionalised heterosexuality and thus possibly alienates audiences accustomed to an easier queer fix? Was it because the director was a woman, since the only other lesbian on hand was Monika Treut, who by now should probably be classified as post-queer? Whatever the reason, Friedrich's elegant short stuck out, a barometer in a pack of audience-pleasers.

The epiphanic moment, if there was one,

was the screening of Jarman's *Edward II*, which reinscribed the homosexuality so integral to its sixteenth-century source via a syncretic style that mixed past and present in a manner so arch that the film easily fits its tag, the 'QE2'. Think pastiche, as OutRage demos and gay-boy calisthenics mix with minimalist period drama. Homophobia is stripped bare as a timeless occupation, tracked across centuries but never lacking in historical specificity. Obsessive love, meanwhile, is enlarged to include queer desire as a legitimate source of tragedy.

For women, *Edward II* is a bit complicated. Since the heroes are men and the main villain is a woman, some critics have condemned it as misogynist. Indeed, Tilda Swinton's brilliance as an actor – and full co-creator of her role – invests her character with more weight, and thus more evil, than anyone else on screen. But the film is also a critique of heterosexuality and of a world ruled by royals and Tories, and Isabella seems more inspired by Thatcher than woman-hating. Annie Lennox is clearly meant to be on the side of girls and angels. Her solo 'Every Time We Say Goodbye' accompanies Edward and Gaveston's last dance, bringing grandeur, modernity, even post-modernity, to their tragedy. The song comes from the Aids-benefit album, *Red Hot and Blue*, in which video Lennox inscribed images of Jarman's childhood in a tribute to his activism and HIV status. Thus does Jarman's time travel insist on carrying the court into today's gay world.

Dateline: Amsterdam

The official car showed up at the airport with the festival's own steamy poster of girls in heat and boys in lust plastered all over it. Amsterdam, city of lights for faggots and dykes, offered the promise of an event purely one's own in the city celebrated for queerness. Expectations were running high, but in fact the festival showed all the precious advantages and irritating problems that life in the ghetto entails. It was a crucible for queer work, all right, but some got burned. How does this event fit into the big picture set by the 'big' festivals? Well, it doesn't. The identity that elsewhere becomes a badge of honour here became a straitjacket. But would 'elsewhere' exist without the 'here'?

Amsterdam was an exercise in dialectics in action, with both pleasures and dangers. Film-maker Nick Deocampo from the Philippines was planning his country's first gay festival and hoping that the 'war of the widows' wouldn't forestall it. Race, status, romance, gender, even the necessity of the festival came up for attack and negotiation, on those few occasions when the public got to talk back. Pratibha Parmar affirmed the importance of a queer circuit – "my lifeline" – sure that it's key to the work. Jarman disagreed: "Perhaps their time is up", maybe life in the ghetto now offers diminished returns. So though Jarman and Ulrike Ottinger got awards here, and though Jarman used the opening night to call for the decriminalisation of Oscar Wilde, the meaning of such an event remained contested.

Not that there weren't good films at Amsterdam. But the best work seemed to come from

long ago or far away, like the great shows of German cross-dressing movies or the Mary Wings tribute to 'Greta Garbo's lesbian past' or the extraordinary 60s fantasy from Japan, *Funeral of Roses*. There were even two terrific new lesbian films, both deserving of instant cult status. Cleo Uebelmann's *Mano Destra* brought bondage and domination straight to the viewer, serving up knot fetishism and the thrills of specular anticipation with an uncanny understanding of cinema's own powers. From a trio of Viennese film-makers (Angela Hans Scheirl, Dietmar Schipek, Ursula Puerrer) came *Flaming Ears*, a surreal fable that draws on comics and sci-fi traditions for a near-human love story visualised in an atmosphere of cabaret, rubble and revenge. Its fresh 'cyberdyke' style reflects Austrian sources as diverse as Valie Export and Otto Muehle, but shot through with Super-8 visual rawness and a script that could have been written by J. G. Ballard himself.

It was a shame that the Dutch press marginalised the festival, because the kind of 'scoop' that the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* would later find in Utah could have been theirs right at home. A new kind of lesbian video surfaced here, and with it emerged a contemporary lesbian sensibility. Like the gay male films now in the limelight, this video has everything to do with a new historiography. But where the boys are archaeologists, the girls have to be alchemists. Their style is unlike almost anything that's come before. I would call it lesbian camp, but the species is, after all, better known for camping. And historical revisionism is not a

catchy term. So just borrow from Hollywood, and think of it as the Great Dyke Rewrite.

Here's a taste of the new genre. In Cecilia Dougherty's *Grapefruit*, white San Francisco dykes unapologetically impersonate John, Yoko and the Beatles – proving that appropriation and gender-fuck make a great combination. Cecilia Barriga's *The Meeting of Two Queens* re-edits Dietrich and Garbo movies to construct the dyke fan's dream narrative: get the girls together, help them get it on. It's a form of idolatry that takes the feminist lit-crit practice of 'reading against the grain' into new image territory, blasting the results on to the screen (or monitor, to be exact). In one episode of Kaucyilia Brooke and Jane Cottis' *Dry Kisses Only*, Anne Baxter's back-stage meeting with Bette Davis in *All About Eve* is altered, inserting instead of Baxter a dyke who speaks in direct address to the camera about her tragic life, her life working in a San Francisco lesbian bar, her love lost to Second World War combat. She's cross-cut with Bette's reaction shots, culminating with Davis taking her arm (and taking her home).

Apart from the videos, festival lesbians pinned all voyeuristic hopes on the 'Wet' Party, where they would finally get to the baths. Well, sort of. Everyone certainly tried. Outfits ranged from the campiness of childhood-at-the-beach to show-your-leather seriousness. Women bobbed in the pool, playing with rubber rafts and inflated black and white fuck-me dolls. (Parmar would later note that there were more inflatables of colour in attendance than actual women of colour.) San Francisco sex-stars Shelly Mars and Susie Bright both performed,

though the grand moment in which Bright seemed to be lecturing us on "Oedipal underwear" turned out to be a cruel acoustical joke: she was actually extolling the virtue of *edible* underwear. But the back rooms were used for heart-to-hearts, not action. Caught between the states of dress-up and undress, everyone waited for someone else to do something.

Other parties offered other pleasures. At one, Jimmy Somerville, unscheduled, did a Sylvester homage. At another, Marilyn Monroe appeared, frosted on to a giant cake, clutching her skirt, only to be carved up by a gaggle of male chefs. In the end, somehow, Amsterdam was the festival you loved to hate, the place where everyone wanted the world and wouldn't settle for less, where dirty laundry could be washed in public and anyone in authority taken to task, where audiences were resistant to experimental and non-narrative work, and where criticisms were bestowed more bountifully than praise. Still, while the market place might be seductive, it's not yet democratic. Amsterdam was the place where a 'Wet' Party could at least be staged, where new works by women and people of colour were accorded pride of place, where video was fully integrated into the programming. Amsterdam was a ritual gathering of the tribe and, like a class reunion, filled with ambivalence.

Park City, Utah

Everything came together at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City. Christopher Münch's *The Hours and Times* is a good example. Audiences fell in love with this imaginary chron-



Queers on the lam: Gregg Araki's 'The Living End' puts queers on the map as legitimate genre subjects

◀ icle of Brian Epstein and John Lennon's last tango in Barcelona. Münch's camera style and script are a reprise of *cinéma vérité*, as though some dusty reels had been found in a closet in Liverpool and expertly edited, as though Leacock or Pennebaker had turned gay-positive retroactively. Epstein tries to get Lennon into bed, using old-world angst, homo-alienation, Jewish charm. Lennon tries to sort out his life, balancing wife Cynthia against groupie against Epstein, trying to have it all and to figure out whatever will come next. Just a simple view of history with the veil of homophobia pulled back. It's rumoured that the dramatic jury at Sundance loved it so much, they wanted to give it the Grand Prize – but since it wasn't feature length they settled on a special jury award.

"Puts the Homo back in Homicide" is the teaser for Tom Kalin's first feature, *Swoon*, but it could easily apply to Gregg Araki's newest, *The Living End*, as well. Where Kalin's film is an interrogation of the past, Araki's is set resolutely in the present. Or is it? Cinematically, it restages the celluloid of the 60s and 70s: early Godard, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Badlands*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, every pair-on-the-run movie that ever penetrated Araki's consciousness. Here, though, the guys are HIV positive, one bored and one full of rage, both of them with nothing to lose. They could be characters out of a porn flick, the stud and the john, in a renegotiated terrain. Early Araki films are often too garage-hand, too boychick, too far into visual noise, but this one is different. Camera style and palette update the New Wave. Araki's stylistic end runs have paid off, and this time he's got a queers-on-the-lam portrait that deserves a place in movie history – an existential film for a post-porn age, one that puts queers on the map as legitimate genre subjects. It's quintessentially a film of its time.

And so is *Swoon*, though it might seem otherwise, what with the mock-period settings, the footage purloined from the 20s, and the courtroom-accurate script, based on the 1924 Chicago trial of Leopold and Loeb, the pair of rich Jewish boys who bonded, planned capers, and finally killed a boy. In the wake of the Dahmer case, it would be easy to think of this as a film about horrific acts. *Swoon*, however, deals in different stakes: it's the history of discourses that's under Kalin's microscope, as he demonstrates how easily mainstream society of the 20s could unite discrete communities of outsiders (Jews, queers, blacks, murderers) into a commonality of perversion. The whole look of the film – director of photography Ellen Kuras won the prize for cinematography in dramatic film in Park City – emphasises this view with the graphic quality of its anti-realism, showing how much Kalin, Kuras and co-producer Vachon tailored its look.

As part of a new generation of directors, Kalin isn't satisfied to live in the past, even a post-modern past. No, *Swoon* takes on the whole enterprise of 'positive images', definitively rejecting any such project and turning the thing on its head. I doubt that anyone who damned *The Silence of the Lambs* for toxic homophobia will swallow *Swoon* easily, but hopefully the film will force a rethinking of positions.

Claim the heroes, claim the villains, and don't mistake any of it for realism.

Throughout Sundance, a comment Richard Dyer made in Amsterdam echoed in my memory. There are two ways to dismiss gay film: one is to say, "Oh, it's just a gay film"; the other, to proclaim, "Oh, it's a great film, it just happens to be gay". Neither applied to the films in Park City, since they were great precisely because of the ways in which they were gay. Their queerness was no more arbitrary than their aesthetics, no more than their individual preoccupations with interrogating history. The queer present negotiates with the past, knowing full well that the future is at stake.

Like film, video is a harbinger of that future, even more so. Yet Sundance, like most film festivals, showed none. To make a point about the dearth of lesbian work in feature film and to confront the industry with its own exclusions, the Barbed Wire Kisses panel opened with a projected screening of Sadie Benning's videotape *Jollies* – and brought down the house. With an absolute economy of means, Benning constructed a *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dyke* such as we've never seen before. "I had a crush. It was 1978, and I was in kindergarten". The lines are spoken facefront to the camera, black-and-white images floating into the frame alongside the words enlisted to spell out her emotions on screen, associative edits calling settled assumptions into question.

The festival ended, of course. Isaac Julien returned to London to finish *Black and White in Colour*, his documentary on the history of blacks in British television. High-school dropout Sadie Benning left to show her tapes at Princeton, and to make another one, *I Wasn't Love*, that proves she's no fluke. Derek Jarman and Jimmy Somerville were arrested for demonstrating outside parliament. Christopher Münch and Tom Kalin picked up prizes in Berlin. Gregg Araki found himself a distributor. New work kept getting produced: the San Francisco festival found its submissions up by 50 per cent in June. The Queer New Wave has come full circle: the boys and their movies have arrived.

But will lesbians ever get the attention for their work that men get for theirs? Will queers of colour ever get equal time? Or video achieve the status reserved for film? Take, for example, Cheryl Dunye, a young video-maker whose *She Don't Fade* and *Vanilla Sex* put a sharp, satiric spin on black romance and cross-race illusions. Or keep an eye out for Jean Carlomusto's *I is For the Way You Look*, to catch a definitive portrait of dyke fandom and its importance for, uh, subject position.

For one magical Saturday afternoon in Park City, there was a panel that traced a history: Derek Jarman at one end on the eve of his fiftieth birthday, and Sadie Benning at the other, just joining the age of consent. The world had changed enough that both of them could be there, with a host of cohorts in between. All engaged in the beginnings of a new queer historiography, capable of transforming this decade, if only the door stays open long enough. For him, for her, for all of us.

B. Ruby Rich is a San Francisco-based cultural critic

QUEER QUESTIONS

Is queer cinema possible? Four film-makers living in Britain respond to the arguments and passion of B. Ruby Rich's article



Derek Jarman: films include 'The Angelic Conversation' and 'Edward II'

Ruby's right. The Sundance festival marked the birth of queer cinema in the US because there was a very packed discussion in a large public hall. But it's more complicated here, simply because there hasn't been a similar discussion at the London Film Festival or the Edinburgh Festival.

Edward II is the first film of mine shown in the US that has been an obvious commercial success. Fineline had distributed *My Own Private Idaho* and it meant that another hurdle had fallen, making it possible for *Idaho* to be shown in shopping malls. What's strange is that *Sebastiane* played in local cinemas throughout Britain in 1976, whereas when it was shown in the US it was given an 'S' rating, which meant it was shown in pornographic cinemas – where it disappointed everyone. So in a way, the distribution of independent work of that kind happened years ago here: our cinema was in that way far in advance of the US.

As students in the 60s, we did not watch Hollywood. The US underground, Stan Brakhage and Harry Smith was my upbringing. None of us went to mainstream cinema until Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* appeared in 1968. Because of economic pressures, most queer film has had to reinvent itself in the avant-garde. There remains a desperate need for women's cinema; there is still a huge gap.

At fifty, I stand between the two generations of the word 'queer' – where once it was used in a derogatory way, I am delighted now that I can reclaim it. There are still difficulties: I had discussions about the lesbian and gay archive and we felt that we couldn't call it 'Queer Archive' – maybe next year. I am optimistic. Queer seems to me to be a democratic word: it is not so obviously gender-based, and has united lesbians and gays. My first feeling was that queer was erotic – it put sexuality back into a sanitised world where we lived with our 'partners', not boyfriends. I can say things I've never said before. That's great. Queer came as a gift for me. It gave me space and enabled me to rethink the idea of a gay community. There never was a community, in fact. There was a community of interests

and much of it had become thoroughly middle-aged and moribund. Queer opened up a very valuable debate among ourselves.

One of the problems was that with the word 'gay' came a drive for positive images, but all the artists I knew and respected were involved with negative images because that was the intelligent thing to do in a culture which promoted all that false positivity through advertising and so on. What was positive? White, middle class, male? I don't know. No one ever defined it. You can't make work in categories, and if that's gay aesthetics, let's get rid of it.

At the moment I'm struggling with a film on Wittgenstein and he had enough problems to reinvent philosophy. It's great that there are so many other film-makers around now; I could bow out knowing the future is in safe hands, like Sadie Benning's.



Pratibha Parmar: films include 'Khush' and 'Double the Trouble, Twice the Fun'

Queer cinema has been going on for decades, although not in its current manifestation – that is, a marketable, collective commodity produced by white gay men in the US. Jarman's work has always seemed queer to me, but now a collective confidence, taking queer as a given, is emerging. It's a point we've reached through years of political organising, and personally I feel a part of this. In New York, for example, both Todd Haynes and Tom Kalin have been nurtured by queer activism such as ACT UP.

Elements of Rich's article seem somewhat misleading, in particular the marking out of Sundance as the beginning of a new queer historiography. I also felt perturbed by the obvious absence of a whole litany of lesbian film-makers who aren't referenced. The fact that a group of very talented white gay men are getting exposure and access to budgets is to be welcomed, but we also need to consider the difficulties, through gender inequality, of access to economic and marketing resources for lesbian film-makers.

I find the formal inventiveness of the recent films exciting and exhilarating. Queers have been marginalised to such an extent that we have felt compelled to subvert dominant genres. Now the question of pleasure is very high on the agenda, not surprisingly in the age of Aids. Cultural interventions can be pleasurable, too.

I am wary of talking about on over-

arching queer aesthetic, as my sensibility comes as much from my culture and race as from my queerness. In queer discourses generally there is a worrying tendency to create an essentialist, so called authentic, queer gaze. My personal style is determined by diverse aesthetic influences, from Indian cinema and cultural iconography to pop promos and 70s avant-garde films. My film, *A Place of Rage*, which explores questions of sexuality but doesn't prioritise these, sold out in the LA and San Francisco lesbian and gay festivals, proving that queer audiences are hungry for queer visions painted on a broader canvas.

My work has much wider distribution and profile in North America. Racism and censorship exist on both sides of the Atlantic, but there is a sense in the US that recognition for my work is based on merit rather than personality or tokenism. Queer aesthetics has been developing in both places and there is an ongoing exchange. For instance, there is a filmic dialogue between *Looking for Langston* and *Swoon*, as there is between Marlon Riggs and Isaac Julien, even though their work is very different.

In Britain, there is clearly a gap in institutional support for most queer films. One of the only exciting developments in the recent past has been the pioneering *Out* television series, which has given many of us access to funding and to a much wider audience. Unfortunately there won't be any new commissions next year because of budget cuts.

Rich's article suggests that there is an ongoing debate about the role and need for lesbian and gay film festivals. By arbitrarily putting Jarman and myself in opposite camps, Rich, I fear, is inventing a false debate. Queer festivals are essential for many film-makers, especially lesbians and people of colour, because it's often the only place we can get our work screened and affirmed. I know Jarman would agree with this. What's becoming clear, however, is that these festivals are programmed predominantly by white gay men and women who prioritise their own constituencies, further marginalising queers of colour.



Isaac Julien: films include 'Looking for Langston' and 'Young Soul Rebels'

The general trend towards a break for lesbian and gay representations happened after *Poison* and *Paris Is Burning* won prizes at Sundance two years ago,

which signalled a growing lesbian and gay contingent at mainstream festivals. Despite my problems with *Paris Is Burning*, it did create a lot of space to talk about film in relation to the box office and proved that lesbian and gay film could reach a wider audience.

I'm nervous about terms like 'lesbian and gay aesthetic' and 'black aesthetic' because if you're participating in film culture, then you're involved in certain practices and cultural constructions such as the form and politics of representation, which cannot be reduced to a single aesthetic. What is happening is a difference in stance – a militantly confrontational attitude. However, we know that what's queer today will be appropriated as gay tomorrow.

Until I spent a few months living in the US I was more critical of queer. But when the *Dallas Times* refused to run an ad for *Young Soul Rebels* which showed the two gay characters kissing, Queer Nation stopped it going to press, and I thought, 'yeah!'. *Young Soul Rebels* may sit uncomfortably in a new queer cinema, and I'm glad it does. In the context of black cinema and a straight black audience, *Young Soul Rebels* is a very queer film. Maybe for a gay audience, it's not queer enough. There's a strategic positioning that's to do with how under attack different communities have been and why they revert to essentialist positions around identity. But I still hold an ambivalent position towards new queer cinema in terms of address. For most white queer film-makers there is no intersection of race.

The queer tradition in Britain has its beginnings in the work of Derek Jarman, John Maybury and Cerith Wyn-Evans, who have influenced me. The New Romantic movement was a spin-off of punk and a celebration of excess that located itself in and against the aesthetics of an avant-garde movement in the early 80s that was very anti-pleasure. In Britain, people see a big separation between ideas and film-making. The literary base is emphasised more.

Ruby's article addresses the fact that most lesbians, such as Cheryl Dunye and Sadie Benning, are working in video under different economies of scale, as is Marlon Riggs. Too often that isn't acknowledged. The need to classify ignores the fact that different films are trying to do different things and are working at different production levels. All those questions of gender/race power relations are still there.

It's important to differentiate between queer politics (like Queer Nation), queer theory and queer cinema. There has been a distinct epistemological break, with texts like *How Do I Look?* edited by Bad Object Choice making interventions into academia and challenging inadequate hetero paradigms. These theoretical trajectories are exciting, but you have to beware of expediency in the new queer cinema – do people want it to be taken seriously or to be seen as a fad? Some of the work represents the most innovative film being produced and is posing serious questions about cinema today.



Constantine Giannaris: films include 'Caught Looking' and 'North of Vortex'

It's difficult to say what marked the birth of a queer cinema for me, but seeing *Poison*, I suddenly realised that there were other film-makers on my wavelength. It was very liberating and opened up all kinds of formal options, like playing with genre and using cinema as a form of quotation.

In many ways it isn't a new aesthetic, but a collection of different aesthetics. Many gay films have been involved in a form of civil rights in a blatantly uncinemantic way. They lost the creator behind the film, with his or her own foibles, dementias and demons, to the positive-images debate.

The problem I have with queer is the difference between the European and American understanding of it. I wouldn't necessarily have been out campaigning against *Basic Instinct*; I would have dealt with it in a more ironic way. In the US, queer is just like saying, "We've gotten flabby and the movement's middle-aged, we need a tonic in the arm". That doesn't represent a fundamental break with the notion of what gay was and what queer is – intrinsically transgressive sexuality which will always be in conflict with the status quo. Queer for Ruby Rich is very much gay with knobs on.

Rich talks about "trouble in paradise", but is it paradise? It's only a start, and the absence of women is enormous, but that can't be overcome by formal measures – "we've got to have a lesbian film". The men have had the images and can recycle them, so in a sense it's self-propagating. Also, the state of independent film in the US is appalling. They're all working on extremely low levels of funding. On another level, however, that's really inspirational.

What I'm trying to grapple with now is whether my sexuality has any relevance to the broader world. How does it allow certain insights which are not necessarily related to our homosexuality? I want to use these formal devices, that outlook and sensibility to look at a wider society. I hope we don't get a series of films over the next decade which are obsessively about the transgressive nature of our sexuality. A film doesn't have to be about gay/queer sexuality, or even about sexuality at all, to be queer. It's taking on taboos, saying the unsayable – to me that's what queerness is.

Responses compiled by Cherry Smyth



Tom Kalin in conversation
with Seun Okewole on
'Swoon', style and desire

TOM KALIN

Each year, New York's Independent Feature Film Market provides a necessary platform for film-makers at varying levels of independence to exhibit their films to the industry at large. In an informal atmosphere, writers, directors and producers meet buyers, exhibitors and schedulers potentially interested in funding or purchasing their work. Unique in that it admits both shorts and features as well as specially prepared versions of unfinished work, the Market has been responsible for providing early public exposure for films such as Louis Malle's *My Dinner with André* (1981) and Jim Jarmusch's *Down By Law* (1986). Norman Rene's *Longtime Companion* (1990) also received an early outing, as did *Poison* (1991), Todd Haynes' and Christine Vachon's delinquent take on American society.

Vachon's and Haynes' company Apparatus, one of too few such organisations in New York, was set up to fund short films, offering up to \$20,000 per production. Later it became a granting organisation, awarding less cash but increasing the volume of projects in which it became involved. At the 1991 IFFM, Vachon was back with yet another film – a five-minute edit of Tom Kalin's debut feature: *Swoon*.

Kalin, a Chicago-born New Yorker, made a name for himself on the art-house movie scene through the sheer outrage and inventiveness of his video short, *They Are Lost to Vision Altogether*, an experimental thirteen-minute black-and-white and colour observation of the treatment of Aids information by the US government and media. Before this, the thirty-year-old director had been an associate producer at AIDS Films, an Aids education company, working on films

on issues surrounding Aids prevention and education made by four separate communities in New York.

In 1989 Kalin approached Vachon, through Apparatus. To make the feature-length *Swoon* he had written to "every possible granting organisation in the US" and managed to raise \$100,000, awarded on the merit of *They Are Lost to Vision*. Vachon agreed to produce, leaving Kalin free to concentrate on the script, an account of how in 1924, eighteen-year-old Nathan Freudenthal Leopold Jnr and Richard A. Loeb, sons of wealthy Jewish Chicago families, kidnapped and murdered fourteen-year-old Bobby Franks, purely for the intellectual stimulation afforded by the crime. The young men were soon apprehended, brought to trial and sentenced, each receiving ninety-nine years plus life. Their cold, hard, Nietzsche-driven reasoning somehow led them to neglect the more banal details of their actions: indelible traces were left at the scene of the crime, evidence compounded by their final, pressured mutual denunciation.

If this sounds familiar, it's because it is not the first time the Leopold/Loeb story has made it on to the screen. It already exists in altered form, as Alfred Hitchcock's one-take wonder *Rope* (1948), in which Farley Granger plays Leopold, the sensitive half of the murderous duo. Eleven years later in Richard Fleischer's *Compulsion* (1959), Orson Welles appears as the defence attorney Clarence Darrow in a version marginally closer to the truth. Unsurprisingly, neither film addresses the certain existence of the pair's homosexual relationship, and to set that record straight is Kalin's primary motive for making another film on the subject. Disregarding protests about negative imaging, Kalin maintains that the sexual relationship between Leopold and Loeb was an important reason for their behaviour.

At last year's IFFM, American Playhouse, having viewed a rough cut, offered to carry the film to completion. US distribution rights were secured with Fineline, so helping to lay a number of Kalin's and Vachon's independent filmmaker anxieties to rest. Shortly after this I met Kalin in a deli on Lafayette Street, on the same block as Apparatus and his own Intolerance Pictures, formed specifically for the film. He had been editing round the clock, his head was buzzing, his was racing.

How did you start to raise funding for 'Swoon'?

I applied with a treatment called *Intolerance*, written with Hilton Als. I was originally going to do an ambitious piece that took the structure of D. W. Griffith's story and produced a reading of lesbian and gay marginalisation in twentieth-century culture by taking specific historical episodes – the Leopold/Loeb case was going to be just one – and attempting to link them up: how what happened in 1913 related to 1924, related to the mid-50s, related to now. *Why did that concept change?*

To make a film of that scale with the level of funding and access I had was impossible. And then what I was really compelled by was the Leopold/Loeb case. There was also the English case of the silent twins – June and Jennifer Gibbons – which Hilton had become involved in:

they literally refused language and invented their own, totally metaphoric and very beautiful, an interesting idea of twinning and couples. We related Leopold and Loeb to them.

How did you begin to research the story?

I started in 1988, though most of what I know I know intuitively. My grandmother was obsessed by the case; she was a little older than Leopold and Loeb and kept a Leopold and Loeb scrapbook.

What struck you about the legend?

The gay aspect was always reduced to innuendo in Chicago history. I'd see the photographs of these two beautiful boys from the 20s; there was something in the photographs about the relationship, I could tell, but it was always very hushed. In fact, they weren't gay as we understand it. Homosexual identity in 20s Chicago was different from what we think of now.

After two quite competent films about the case, 'Rope' and 'Compulsion', why make another?

To state publicly, once and for all, in an unabashed and direct fashion the facts of the case. That's why the script is very close to the research: almost all the confession speeches and courtroom material is either literally transcribed or condensed, though obviously it's interpreted.

What's your theory?

The case is murky and tangled. They did kill a boy, they had a sexual relationship, and they were also involved in an exchange of crime for sex. Nathan Leopold was very much in love with Richard Loeb in a 'homosexual' way; Richard was a sociopath, able to seduce people to his point of view, but not very sexually motivated. He used his sexual charm to say to Nathan, "if you'll go along with me in these criminal activities, I'll allow you to use me sexually". In a way it was a classic SM configuration of power and submission, but not so simple as Richard being in control of Nathan, as they both were both the master and the slave. I don't think the crime came directly out of sexuality, but it was linked to it.

Visually Kalin opts for a contemporary veneer: his acknowledgment of the style of Bruce Weber's photographs relays what he calls a "revisionist aesthetic". There is also reference to the Nazi photographer, Herbert List, and to Leni Riefenstahl: "very over-laboured, you can't miss it". To communicate the atmosphere of the period he has reproduced it with a similar extravagance – retro style: "All the original photographs of Leopold and Loeb have that glamour: the Valentino hairstyles, the good suits, smoking cigarettes, sitting just so... I wanted to pay tribute to that element of it".

The film opens with elegant creatures gliding across the screen in expansive, romantic, monochrome mileux – it could be Montauk or the Hamptons, but it's not. Rather it's a scene within a scene, and Kalin widens the film from a narrow homogeneous elite to embrace a humanscape of minorities that includes a selection of fabulous, enigmatic drag queens. Why are they included?

Gender is not innate, it's a performance. We learn gender through a series of codes, and in a subtle way I wanted to gender-fuck, to propose disarray. I don't believe drag queens are always degrading to women. Later, in the courtroom, there's a stenographer who is very compelling because she's played by a black woman wearing

Amy Taubin on Kalin's queer film 'Swoon', feminism, and the limits of the new cinema

BEYOND THE SONS OF SCORSESE

Rooted in Cocteau and Warhol, Fassbinder and Kenneth Anger, Genet and Jack Smith, American queer cinema has achieved critical mass. Encouraged by twenty-five years of gay activism made urgent by the Aids crisis and a right-wing homophobic backlash, queer film-makers have fought back through production of images.

In the past three years, gay-themed films have garnered the kind of attention that makes Hollywood want a slice of the action. Warners is following up its Malcolm X biopic with a film about Harvey Milk, to be directed by Gus Van Sant. And TriStar has *People Like Us* (working title), a Jonathan Demme movie about a gay lawyer who's sacked when his firm discovers that he's HIV positive, ready to shoot in autumn.

Demme and Van Sant are no strangers to the contradictions of gay cultural politics. Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* was attacked as homophobic because its serial killer Buffalo Bill was read as a negative gay stereotype. And Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* was attacked by some of the same critics for its lack of positive images of gay life. But it's Van Sant's depiction of marginality – the teenage male hustler hopelessly in love with a slumming preppie prince in *Idaho*, the grocery clerk obsessed by an illegal Mexican migrant worker in *Mala Noche* (1985) – coupled with his non-linear, associative film-making strategies, that make him one of the leaders of American queer cinema.

Budgeted at \$2 million, *Idaho* is the priciest queer movie to date. The \$20,000 *Mala Noche* is a more pertinent model for a queer cinema that is subversive in content, form and methods of production, but maintains just enough of a narrative spine to win it theatrical or television prime-time release. In 1991, the emblematic US queer films – Todd Haynes' *Poison*, Jennie Livingston's *Paris Is Burning* and Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied* – each cost less than \$200,000. So did the most interesting and visible of 1992: Tom Kalin's *Swoon*, Christopher Munch's *The Hours and Times* and Gregg Araki's *The Living End*. These last three shared so many festival spotlights that it became impossible not to think of them as part

of a single impulse. A quick look at their similarities and differences might provide some sense of the range and limitations of queer cinema.

A visually spare and emotionally intricate chamber film (60 minutes, black and white) about what might have happened between Brian Epstein and John Lennon during a weekend the two spent together in Barcelona in 1963, Munch's *The Hours and Times* is so far removed from biopic, docudrama or *cinéma vérité* as to seem *sui generis*. Munch is a pomo humanist – a rare combination – raiding the image bank for the purpose of constructing empathetic characters. He told me in an interview that what was missing from the material he researched was "a sense of what it was like to be Epstein".

Aided by David Angus' selfless performance, *The Hours and Times* shows precisely what it was like to be the intelligent, physically awkward, emotionally vulnerable, self-deprecating Epstein – the gay Jewish aesthete hopelessly in love with a working-class tough whose genius was his spontaneity and intuitive grasp of "the hours and times" in which he came of age. The film flies in the face of the hetero culture of *Rolling Stone* by suggesting that Lennon was capable of a homoerotic involvement. And it defies simplistic gay identity politics by representing a deep affinity between two men that is not defined by the sexual act. That the film doesn't specify what, if anything, happens when Lennon and Epstein share a bed, is exactly the point. Because, either way, it didn't change the relationship.

Although *The Hours and Times* is about a relationship between two men, women figure prominently in its narrative. In addition to the off-screen presences of Epstein's mother and Lennon's wife, there's the stewardess who visits Lennon's hotel room. "What would you do if I said I wanted to make love to you?", he asks. "I might agree or I might not", is her self-possessed reply.

Like *The Hours and Times*, Kalin's *Swoon* uses black and white as a sign of history and memory. But unlike Munch, who evokes our identification with Epstein in terms of what Epstein says and does vis-à-vis his object of desire, Kalin wants us to admit the eroticism of protagonist Nathan Leopold's fantasies, which he suggests through fragmentary sounds and images and slip/sliding camera moves. Tony Rayns nailed it when he wrote: "the film uncovers an orgasmic truth

between the flutter of bird wings and the sound of a whip lash".

Kalin makes a pretty clear case for the process by which internalised homophobia and anti-semitism are transformed into sado-masochistic fantasies and a fascination with criminality. The first half of the film unabashedly identifies with Leopold, with his equation of glamour and deviance. If his homosexuality places him outside the law, it's also his connection to Chicago's underworld.

Swoon falters when it attempts the leap from erotic fantasy to the actuality of child murder. Abandoning Leopold's subjectivity, it perfunctorily filters the crime through various institutional perspectives – psychoanalytic, criminological, legalistic – all of them homophobic. At this point, I began to have the sense that Kalin was less interested in Leopold and Loeb than in the way their myth was formative in terms of his own sexuality. Failing to make that connection explicit and failing to illuminate the crime itself (in the way, for example, that Fassbinder illuminates the patricide in *Wild Game*), the film ends up as conceptually muddled as it's visually elegant. One should not underestimate, however, its importance in proclaiming a desire that is anything but 'politically correct'.

Gregg Araki's *The Living End* treats the queer-as-criminal theme from a contemporary perspective. An angry young drifter and an anxious young film critic, both HIV positive, fall in love, and, with nothing to lose, crash through to the other side of the law. The sex between the men is sweet, hot and extremely moving; *The Living End* is best when Araki sets aside his California cool and risks the aching romanticism of *Pierrot le fou* combined with the melodramatics of *Duel in the Sun*.

If one accepts these three films, along with *Poison*, *Paris Is Burning* and *Tongues Untied*, as the effective queer films of the 90s, then the limitation of that cinema is obvious: queer cinema is figured in terms of sexual desire and the desire it constructs is exclusively male. (Jennie Livingston is a lesbian director, but *Paris Is Burning* is about black and hispanic male transvestites.) Indeed women are even more marginalised in 'queer' than in heterosexual film; at least in the latter, they function as objects of desire. (Which is why the pre-feminist stewardess who comes between Epstein and Lennon is such a powerful figure.) Worse still, *Tongues Untied* and *The Living End* are heedlessly

misogynistic. Where does the politics of *Tongues Untied* – that "black men loving black men is the revolutionary act" leave lesbians of any colour? I'd say high and dry. As for *The Living End*'s inept lesbian serial killers and the woman who kills her lover when she discovers he's bisexual, a case could be made that they are no more or less stereotypical than their nerdy hetero male counterparts: all of them function as comic relief. But then what is one to make of Araki's claim that the woman whose symbiotic attachment to the gay hero defines her entire emotional life is a feminist character?

In fact, this queer cinema has much more in common with the current crop of male violence films (with Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* or Nick Gomez's *Laws of Gravity*, for example) than it does with any feminist cinema. Like Tarantino and Gomez, Araki and Kalin are also the sons of Scorsese, whose films define and critique masculinity through violence but also make Robert De Niro a homoerotic object of desire.

To find a cinema that is queer and feminist, one must look further into the margins, where Sadie Benning is using a toy Pixelvision video camera to monitor and exhibit her adolescent lesbian identity. Ten years younger than any of the queer male film-makers above (most of whom are under thirty), Benning shares with them the pleasure of flaunting the fact that she's "as queer as queer can be". Unlike the women film-makers produced by the feminist film theory of the 70s, she doesn't have a problem about defining herself in terms of her sexuality.

Benning's work is easily as powerful as any of the queer films I've mentioned. In terms of form, however, she's making something radically different – a hybrid of video and solo performance in the tradition of gallery artists like Vito Acconci. Benning hasn't made the transition that Chantal Akerman made before our eyes in *Je tu il elle*, when she redirected her attention from the self to the other, thereby acknowledging the narrative standard for theatrical release.

Like Akerman, Haynes, Kalin, Munch, Livingston, Riggs and Araki incorporate the formal and sexual transgressions of the avant-garde within a narrative of queer desire. As long as that desire remains exclusively male, however, it's only queer by half. Amy Taubin is writing a book on 'Taxi Driver'

a bob wig. She looks like a lot of the drag creatures. I intentionally cast an impossible person in that role: in Chicago in the 20s a black man would never have been a stenographer.

I love the way you have her leaving when the courtroom is cleared of women.

It sets up a paradox: how can you send out the stenographer – you would have no court record? It was assumed that women would be horrified by what was being said, that the discovery of gay sexuality would pollute their ears. But what does it mean on the level of who's allowed to listen, who's allowed to speak?

How do you feel about the film's general representation of homosexuality?

I want us to take to task the feeling in the gay community that representation is instrumental. Certainly heterosexual pornography has a strong role in denigrating women and objectifying them, but an unquestioned link from degradation to rape is presumptive. We're in a sorry state if we can't afford to look at 'unwholesome' lesbian or gay people. It's the same thing in the emerging African-American (mainly male) wave of film-making in the US – where are the black women, the gay black

men? It's dangerous if we can't speak from within our own communities about issues that are politically problematic.

But positive representation does have its place?

It has its place because it represents many lives, but it doesn't represent my desires. I'm not going to make myself a slave to a political programme that doesn't benefit me. I think the solution is to make more images rather than less; if someone hates this movie, they should make something that counters it.

'Swoon' opens on 25 September

Seun Okewole is a freelance journalist

new queer cinema



18 September – 1 October
ICA Cinema
Christopher Munch's
The Hours and Times
Prize winner at the Sundance and Berlin Film Festivals and acclaimed as one of the best recent American independent features.

"A gem... exquisitely written and performed... fraught with erotic tension" Newsweek



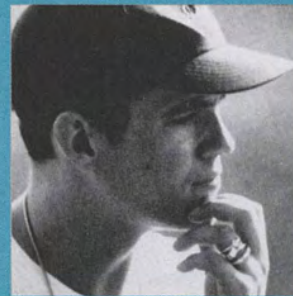
9 – 27 September
ICA Cinematheque
Bruce La Bruce's
No Skin Off My Ass
"Sweeter than Warhol, subtler than Kuchar, sexually more explicit than Van Sant..." Amy Taubin



18 September 22.30
ICA Cinema
Special Preview: Swoon
Introduced and discussed by director Tom Kalin and producer Christine Vachon



16 – 27 September
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Where is the queer dyke cinema to challenge the boys? Cherry Smyth investigates

TRASH FEMME COCKTAIL

I have recently been involved in setting up a group to produce lesbian porn/erotica, called DPP – Dyke Pussy Pictures, Delicious Pudenda Productions – what you will. There is little point in approaching established funding sources, and we will work on video, not because we want to, but because we must. The all-women group includes a film-maker, with her own 16mm equipment, a BBC technician, four film graduates, some with Super-8 cameras, and a professional photographer. The wealth of skills and access to resources is staggering: even five years ago, we would barely have had a camcorder to rub between us. Yet despite the growing numbers of talented lesbian film-makers, there is little evidence of a new queer dyke cinema. At last year's Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, all the work by black women was on video, and the lack of technical proficiency was overwhelming. It is hardly surprising, in terms of economics alone, that more queer women are working in photography than in film or video. In the New Queer Wave, lesbians are drowning.

Desperate to find a queer dyke film, *Rosebud* by Cheryl Farthing has been heralded as 'queer', even though it's as conventional as *Lianna* (John Sayles, 1982) and borrows from a gay male aesthetic of flowers and angels which barely translates into dyke camp. Indeed 'queer' is often used interchangeably with 'lesbian and gay' to describe work that is saying nothing new about the privileging of heterosex and culture. Queer art rejects the need to be accepted on such terms. It is irreverent and shameless where much lesbian and gay work was coy or apologetic. Take the *Out* series. While it may be an unprecedented intervention into mainstream television, it could never be called 'queer cinema', for in style and address, it seeks to be tasteful and tolerated. Although it gave Isaac Julien and Constantine Giannaris space to make quasi-dramas, dykes have only been allowed to produce documentaries, which, apart from Pratibha Parmar's stunning *Khush* and *Double the Trouble*, took few formal risks.

While gay boys have fought against the post-sex rhetoric of the Aids era to assert their right to fuck, dykes have reacted fiercely against the anti-sex prescriptiveness of certain strands of feminism. Some gay male film-makers have just discovered the vulnerability of the body and the fatal power of misrepresentations, whereas dykes, versed in feminist debates, have long interrogated ways to rescue the body and create images of sexual subjectivity.

Sheila McLaughlin's *She Must Be Seeing Things*

(1987), a film that pushed hard to invent a lesbian language to articulate difference and desire, is seen as pre-queer. Had it been produced last year, it may have made it into the queer arena. Annie Sprinkle is one helluva queer lady, but she ain't breaking any boundaries in celluloid. Several independent film-makers in London are not publicly out as lesbians, never mind as queers. Their work, which centres on the feminist body, has the visual elegance, formal inventiveness and pleasure quota praised in 'queer cinema', yet is distinctly 'unqueer' in that it fails to disrupt a heterosexist gaze.

So does claiming queerness depend on a self-knowing irony on the part of the film-maker, address, or audience interpretation? Queer in Britain is used largely by pro-sex dykes whose aesthetic owes more to SM than to *film noir*. Liane Harris of Cinenova, a women's film distribution company, has been trend-spotting. "I don't know if there is a new aesthetic, but there is a new term. It's based in gay male cinema, and lesbian shorts seem to be tacked on to higher-budget feature work by men. Lesbian work reflects a preoccupation with SM, though it's often all image and little real exploration of what power is about. It gives a hard edge, unlike all that soft focus".

Look at *Mano Destra* (Cleo Uebelmann), *Between* (Claudia Schillinger) and one of the latest British video shorts, *Kissy Suzuki Suck* (Alison Murray). Murray's student work assaults violence, voyeurism and female stereotypes, using tough language and rough physical theatre. "I've had a lot of shit since I made this work", says Murray, who's twenty-one and bisexual. "Some people call it pornographic, which I take as a compliment – it is and it's meant to be. Others find the language aggressive – but that's the whole point. I don't want to be written off by a straight audience for being queer, nor do I want to preach to the converted. It's more daring to move beyond that context". Murray has taken the taboos of the feminist anti-porn lobby and flung them back in its face. If men are saying,

"I'm a fag, get used to it", women are asserting, "I'm a macho slut, so what?" The post-punk iconography raided by Murray references Madonna, the hooker and DV8, and whips up a trash femme cocktail that explodes the confines of feminism in an exhilarating promise of what 'queer' could mean for women.

Part of the problem of inventing a queer dyke cinema is the difficulty for lesbians of what Tom Kalin refers to as the "revisionist aesthetic", which pillages and pastiches a vast store of images stretching back to Genet and Cocteau. In seeking past movies to parody, lost images to reclaim, icons to glorify, dykes have always had less booty to raid. Thank god for Marlene, Greta and James Dean. Feminist cinema has been appropriating like fury for twenty years, but more dykes watch *Prisoner Cell Block H* than have seen *Un Chant d'amour* (Jean Genet, 1950). The grimy prison sex scene and wide-angled ennui of the road movie have become *de rigueur* for the queer boy, to the point of aesthetic exhaustion. But when will dykes produce a set of images than can enthrall the boys and, more importantly, the funders, to the same degree?

There is no question that queer cinema has brought with it queer theory and enlivened a stale debate which had floundered under the weight of identity politics and proselytising promises of respectability. How many times have we heard the cry, "But this film doesn't represent me!" at screenings and witnessed the film-maker apologise meekly as s/he struggled to breathe under the responsibility.

Perhaps queer is saying, "No, this film doesn't represent you, unless you're a young, hip, streetwise, white boy, or a dyke who's a wannabe – tough shit". That's why queer dyke cinema will be a long time catching up with the bandwagon, because dykes are not just angry with straight homophobia, and with feminist hypocrisy, they're angry with being excluded by the gay boys as well. Watch out. Cherry Smyth is the author of *Lesbians Talk Queer Notions* (Scarlet Press)



Taking risks: Pratibha Parmar's *'Khush'* brought a queer perspective to mainstream television

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The voyeur's revenge

When I was a boy, my father's bookcase held three books which I wanted to look at but didn't want to be seen looking at. There was his copy of *The Carpetbaggers*, with its never-forgotten scene of a man hacking off his own erect cock in the bathroom mirror; his gym-teacher's manual full of diagrams of men supporting and stretching each other; and his boyhood copy of the book of the 1938 film of *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. It was this last which I really coveted and which I have now, at the age of thirty-four, stolen – and which I may now safely stare at in the privacy of my own home.

The chief attraction of the book (which I can remember enjoying looking at before I could read) was and is the colour plates of Errol Flynn as Hood. What is it with me and Errol? I should know better.

Looking at the book now, I can see the source of the attraction which as a boy was a mystery to me. Flynn as Hood is always carefully photographed; the famous teeth and smile may appear as the excuse for this idolisation of male beauty, but in fact the composition of each still is centred on that famous cock. All Flynn's costumes are cut to within millimetres of revealing his crotch; his tights are so tight that should that leather jerkin ride up, nothing would be left to the imagination. He seems to spend the entire film casually leaping up on to trees, boulders, tables, staircases, shoulders, horses; the viewer spends more time gazing up at Errol in adoration than even Olivia De Havilland's Maid Marian does.

Sexual archetype

Seeing the film as an adult (which I do whenever I get the chance) confirms the intense, bizarre eroticism which I sensed as a child. Never has the myth of male homosexuality been more completely or more pleasurably realised. A band of self-proclaimed 'merry' men live a happy, sweaty life together, united in their opposition to the status quo (the Normans), secure in their chosen sanctuary (Sherwood Forest), inspired by their devotion to an ideal figure of athletic male beauty (Robin Hood). They engage in a communal ritual of (unpunished) criminal pleasures and transgressions which culminates in the ushering in of the reign of the ultimate gay fantasy figure, the one who brings all men to their knees, the original Daddy and Great Dark Man, Richard the Lionheart.

At the centre of this fantasy, Flynn is invested with all the incontrovertible glamour of a sexual archetype. As a constant reminder of what is kept so noticeably hidden, he is always surrounded by surrogate cocks – staves, daggers, antlers, arrows throbbing as they hit the bullseye. Adoring men surround and cheer him; anyone who enters his forest is obliged to strip and hand over their jewels at his command. De Havilland's sinuous costumes reduce her role to variations on a single repeated gesture; she is forever draping herself around, leaning against and snuggling up to the erect Flynn. I know just how she feels. In the film's most memorable image, she inches her draperies slowly down and around a staircase encir-

Neil Bartlett, performer and writer, remembers gazing and gazing at Errol Flynn in 'Robin Hood' – with its merry men, glorious colours and painful climax

cling a gigantic romanesque pillar – the biggest and most tenderly embraced cock in cinema, putting the harbour towers in Fassbinder's *Querelle* to shame.

Her main rival for Flynn's affections is Claude Rains' Prince John, whose status as petulant femme to Flynn's self-assured 'real man' is hinted at by the tell-tale combination of villainy with gluttony and jewellery, and dramatised by his fastidiously styled Jane Wyman wig. Like all true queens, he is a self-conscious usurper, someone who has no right to the throne he occupies or the gowns he wears. And like all true queens, he wants to kill the man he wants but cannot have, to punish him for his beauty and his heterosexuality. He is forever ordering guards and servants to effect the capture of Flynn that he so desperately longs for.

The film climaxes when Basil Rathbone's gorgeously butch Sir Guy of Gisbourne takes on the task which Prince John cannot; in the film's most prolonged fight sequence, Rathbone and Flynn test every position known to the swashbuckler before penetration is finally achieved. Rathbone gets the thrust from Errol that Rains longs for; it kills him, of course. Once this male competition is despatched, the world of the merry men can be left behind and order restored. The queen (of course) loses his real man to a real woman – they then get married, with the real King's approval, while all Robin's mates (and the audience) cheer.

This storyline ought to exterminate any temporary enjoyment a gay man might hope to steal from the film. It doesn't. For one thing, the glorious colours of the film dissolve all reservations; my pleasure at watching Flynn's white horse crash through a glittering stream in the technicolor heart of Sherwood is so intense that it fortifies me against any disapproval of that pleasure. More importantly, the film actively invites



Man to man: Flynn versus Rathbone

misreading; it asks to be taken home and interfered with. This is because it is as dumb as it is handsome. No film could be more blissfully unaware of its own perversions; no performer more completely lacking in sexual ambiguity or self-awareness than Flynn.

In a sense, no performer could be less 'sexy' than Flynn in *Robin Hood*. At no point in his performance does he show any awareness of why we might be staring at him; his is the least knowing smile in Hollywood, the most vacuous beauty. He is blandness personified; he has no attitude. He does nothing to enact his own myth – compare him, for instance, with Warren Beatty, his modern counterpart. Beatty makes sure we know that he knows that we know what we want from him; as a result, his heterosexuality functions as armour. Errol, by contrast, is a fool. He is open to my gaze. I feel sure that he has absolutely no idea why I'm staring at him. His star quality is a paradox; Flynn had no talent to serve as his alibi – watching his films, we know that nothing could possibly justify his presence on screen except his beauty (his fabled cock), but, simultaneously, his presence on screen does nothing to acknowledge the power of that beauty, the aggressive, athletic, dominant persona of Errol 'as in Flynn': Flynn the Lothario, Flynn the heartless, Flynn the rapist, Flynn the biggest in Hollywood.

Dumbly adoring

I used to think that I wanted Errol because of all that – that is, I used to cast myself as either the dumbly adoring Olivia (an appalling role model for a gay child) or as Claude (even worse, though fun for a while). Later, I thought maybe I could butch it up as Basil (my leather-queen phase) or just ride the situation out as one of the merry men (the political, 'brothers-in-arms' solution to what to do with the fact of being homosexual). Now, I realise, I don't want either to fuck or to be fucked by Errol and his famous cock. My revenge on him and his power (the power I knew would punish me if I was caught looking in my father's bookcase) is going to be very simple: I am going to stare at him. I now know that icons are by definition passive. The only power they have is that we invest them with.

So I am going to have my cake and eat it. I am going to sit there in the dark and enjoy Errol and know that there's nothing he can do about it.



A man's man: Errol Flynn in a classic pose from 'Robin Hood'

Up against the system

Michael Eaton

City Boys – Cagney, Bogart, Garfield

Robert Sklar, Princeton University Press, £20.00, 344pp

The author of *Movie-Made America*, a groundbreaking attempt to locate the movie industry within American culture, here sets out to tackle stardom. Sklar's primary aim is to analyse film performance, a neglected area within cinema scholarship, but it is one he never quite achieves. The mystery of film performance remains a mystery, unamenable to academic investigation.

His second aim is to establish the 'City Boy' as a loosely definable Hollywood type vying with the cowboy as a masculine icon "indispensable to American cultural self-definition... the urban tough guy – small, wiry, savvy and street smart, a figure out of the immigrant ghettos and ethnic neighbourhoods of Chicago and New York". Clearly this wise-cracking movie character emerged in the 30s after the invention of sound cinema and was first incarnated by Cagney.

But Sklar's focus never quite fixes on the distinctive features of stellar archetypes and he seems wary about notions of iconography. His study is most successful and

most valuable when he tackles pragmatic and historically demonstrable issues of the construction of these stars within the studio system. This is a book which is more about the way performers function in institutions than it has about their function as representations.

All three of these City Boys, despite differences in background (Bogart was the son of a wealthy Manhattan doctor) and generation (Garfield was born early in the century), began their careers with Warner Bros. This studio is largely remembered today for its cycle of gritty social-realist dramas, but Sklar's near-exhaustive viewing of the Warner Bros canon semi-undermines this pioneering image. His research makes clear that for every *Public Enemy*, *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* or *Body and Soul*, the City Boys were forced into dozens of lacklustre clinkers which tried unsuccessfully to distil and recycle an unknown formula of past success, displaying an insensitivity on the part of the studios to the talents of their most precious commodities.

If the anarchy of today's American film industry sometimes inclines us towards a nostalgia for days gone by, then this book should disabuse us of that wistfulness. For although, in terms of income, these actors were occupants of a stratospherically different plane to that of their audiences in the depression-ridden US, nevertheless, the dictates of capitalism meant that these big box-office stars, along with the writers who con-

structed their images, were treated as disdainfully as any lowly worker.

A sense of their own worth naturally led all three to rebellion: Cagney was one of the first stars to establish his own production company (where sadly he seems to have been just as unable as Warner Bros to develop parts which suited his requirements); Bogart languished for years in B-movie purgatory, wrapping himself in a drink-induced miasma, while poor John Garfield, whose blighted career itself is enough to make an audience weep (but who in my opinion is the most potentially exciting of the three), continually tried to salvage his integrity by returning to the New York stage.

It is interesting to speculate whether it was their awareness of their proletarianised position as performers that led all three, at various times and to varying extents, to identify with progressive causes. Cagney gave generously to strike funds throughout the 30s and was the first star to be publicly exposed as a red, before America had even entered the war. Quite what he had to do to get himself off the hook when the House Un-American Activities Committee came to town seven years later remains a mystery. Bogart publicly championed the Committee for the First Amendment and was then forced through all kinds of hoops to extricate himself from the implications of his honourable actions. And Garfield suffered nothing less than torture by the Inqui-



If looks could kill...
John Garfield, left,
James Cagney, bottom,
Humphrey Bogart, right,
in the role of "the urban
tough guy – small, wiry,
savvy and street-smart"



BFI STILL POSTERS AND DESIGNS (3)

sition. Finally he wrote a cringing *mea culpa*, "I was a sucker for a Left Hook", but the strain of feelings of betrayal killed him. Abraham Polonsky delivered his epitaph: "He defended his street boy's honour and they killed him for it".

Perhaps it is precisely because of Sklar's insistence on the historical actuality of these three careers, which start when the studio system was working with totalitarian cohesiveness and end with that system in ruins, that his other intention of delineating an archetype is not fulfilled. When notions of stardom are viewed in the context of industrial commodification, the case for the transcendent charisma of an essence becomes difficult to sustain.

New wave theories

Ginette Vincendeau

Screening the Text:

Intertextuality in New Wave French Cinema

T. Jefferson Kline,
The John Hopkins University Press,
Baltimore and London, £25.00, 308pp

The central thesis of this book is that the directors of the French New Wave rejected the literary shackles of 'tradition-of-quality' films while themselves displaying a complex and obsessive relationship to literature, albeit literature of a different kind. Rather than adapting the popular classics (Zola, Stendhal), Truffaut, Godard, Rohmer *et al* opted for the radical fragmentation of the new novel and a dazzling collage of references to European high culture going back to Greek myth. But according to Kline, their project was even more ambitious: "Film would no longer be the handmaiden of literature but would stand as its rival".

Kline's theoretical baggage is weighty. He invokes Cavell, Baudry and Metz in the first paragraph and is evidently influenced by Lacan and Derrida. Thus equipped, Kline focuses on individual films (*Jules et Jim*, *Les Amants*, *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*, *Ma nuit chez Maud*) and offers auteur essays on Chabrol (*Le Beau Serge*, *Les Cousins*), Bresson (*Pickpocket*) and Godard (*A bout de souffle* and *Pierrot le fou*). Detailed analysis of the films is combined with erudite tracing of literary sources and allusions. These range from the obvious (Goethe's *Elective Affinities* in *Jules et Jim*, Pascal in *Ma nuit chez Maud*) to the more obscure such as Vivant Denon's eighteenth-century *Point de lendemain*, on which *Les Amants* is loosely based, or Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* in relation to *Marienbad*.

The odds of producing original insights into such over-analysed films are inevitably low, and not surprisingly, Kline's results are uneven. I found the chapters on *Les Amants*, *Marienbad* and *Pickpocket* most rewarding; those on Godard and Chabrol less illuminating. In *Les Amants*, Kline sees connections with the *Carte de Tendre*, (a seventeenth-century visualisation of amorous feelings), with Renoir's *La Règle du jeu* and with Magritte's paintings, which lead him into tantalising speculations about buried feminine elements in the film. Similarly buried in *Marienbad*, Kline argues, is an evocation of the incest-rape motif, traceable through the allusion to Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, which inflects the narrative viewpoint away from Robbe-Grillet's original intentions.

Sometimes Kline's sophisticated theoreti-



The many-sided Simone Signoret: seen here with Laurence Harvey in her Oscar-winning role as the doomed Alice Aisgill in Jack Clayton's 1958 'Room at the Top'

cal apparatus leads to disappointing conclusions, as with his insistence that in *Jules et Jim* the "homosocial bond signified in the double configuration is a subversive message that must be screened out". First, I would have thought that the male bonding in this film is hard to miss, and second, how "subversive" it is begs many questions. Elsewhere, the analysis of literary texts is more illuminating *per se* than in its application to the films. This may be a result of the intertextual approach, which tends to reduce different media to their narrative similarities, but is unable to account for specificity. For instance, *mise en scène* (especially performance) and cinematography are often ignored.

But the greatest problem is the uneasy mix of approaches which many would consider mutually exclusive: psychoanalysis and semiotics on the one hand and authorial intentionality on the other. The result is a strangely ahistorical account of a group of films whose Frenchness is defined as "je ne suis quoi". (American readers may understand this wordplay, but native French-speakers will be baffled.) Such slippages are a pity, for despite its methodological inconsistencies, this is a book which will provide useful literary background to students and teachers of the New Wave.

Star gazing

Claire Monk

Simone Signoret

Catherine David, Bloomsbury,
£17.99, 213pp

Marilyn

Gloria Steinem, Gollancz, £3.99, 220pp

Dud star biographies are common enough, and *Nouvel Observateur* journalist Catherine David's attempt on Simone Signoret is one

of them. Her failure is all the more curious given the remarkable richness of Signoret, who as a subject is far more than the sum of her screen presences: a bourgeois by birth whose life as bohemian, communist, wife to Yves Montand and, by the time of her death in 1985, distinguished writer and champion of human rights, can be read as nothing less than a chronicle of the strengths and shortcomings of the French intellectual left.

Signoret's on-screen career, which is worth a book in itself, reflects her off-screen life in the transition from feline blonde to politically committed character actress; even her 1960 Oscar for *Room at the Top* had an inescapable political dimension for an actress who had been barred from McCarthyite America. But none of this is as interesting to Catherine David as the fact that Simone Signoret has sat in Catherine David's kitchen. Among the book's photographs of Signoret with Sartre, Signoret with Foucault and Signoret with Lech Walesa is one of Signoret with Catherine David, tape recorder clearly visible – yet David's biography contains barely a quote that isn't lifted from elsewhere. "Simone's friends did all they could to put me off", David explains. The result is that great chunks of text – and all the best quotes – come straight from Signoret's own memoirs, particularly *Nostalgia Isn't What It Used To Be*.

But David's dearth of first-hand sources pales into insignificance beside her histrionically artificial, and at times comical, identification with her subject: "I gorged myself on Signoret... on her scent, her whole aura... I changed my skin, my name, my generation... I carried the heavy body of this dead woman inside me like an unborn child". Perhaps the French like this sort of thing. By chapter eight, David is turning portentous over the discovery that she and Signoret shared the same piano teacher. "Chance may be blind, but one can hardly help reading a meaning into coincidences like this".

David's decision to dispense with chronology results in a book written in snatches and asides. Names and movie titles are dropped unexplained into the narrative, so that when she writes of *Dédée d'Anvers*, "Once again [Signoret] plays a streetwalker transformed by love", the words "once again" mean nothing because this strand of Signoret's career has not yet been mentioned.

The book is stronger on Signoret as a political figure, particularly on the fiasco of Montand's eastern bloc tour during the 1956 invasion of Hungary. But even here, Signoret seems shrewder than her biographer about the absurdity of her position as celebrity radical: "I visited my hunger-strikers [the sacked Renault factory workers of the early 70s] in the way charitable ladies in old-fashioned novels went to see their poor", she wrote.

Sexual politics are virtually absent. Perhaps David deems it indiscreet to pursue questions about Signoret's obsessive relationship with Montand at the expense of her film-making career and of her relationship with her daughter. And the promised probing of Signoret's "dark side" is no more than a coda, hinting only obliquely at Signoret's drunkenness and temper.

David's excuse is that hers is a "subject- ▶

«tive, affectionate view». Proof that subjectivity and affection can be positive biographical tools is found in Gloria Steinem's humane and intelligent *Marilyn*, now issued in paperback with George Barris' haunting photographs. "Please don't make me a joke", Monroe pleaded with the last journalist to interview her before her death. "End with what I believe".

Steinem's book is an act of respect which does just that; a feminist project with something vital to say even to those who feel they have already heard too much about the emotionally deprived Norma Jeane. Here is the Marilyn who suffered terrible menstrual pain, read Rilke on set and, when asked about communists by a McCarthy-era journalist retorted, "They're for the people, aren't they?"

Where David's speculations are merely self-dramatising, the questions raised by Steinem touch us all.

Cultural evolution

Julian Graffy

The Zero Hour: Glasnost and Soviet Cinema in Transition

Andrew Horton and Michael Brashinsky,
Princeton University Press, £32.50 (cloth),
£11.95 (paper), 275pp

Given the inaccessibility of much recent Russian and Soviet production even to Russian viewers, it is a substantial achievement that Horton and Brashinsky have seen, and can register, dozens and dozens of features and documentaries of the Gorbachev years. The modest aspirations of their introduction – to observe an evolving process – are more than fulfilled.

The films are grouped under seven chapter headings: the past; young people; women; documentary; popular genres; satire; and the cinema of the non-Russian republics. Though these groupings allow some master works of the period, including Aleksandr Sokurov's *Days of Eclipse* and *The Second Circle* and Vitalii Kanevskii's *Freeze, Die, Get Up Again* to slip through the net, the methodology can be illuminating, as in the consideration of Vasilii Pichul's *Little Vera* within a framework of films about women, or the revelation of recurrent themes of glasnost cinema, for example, the father-son relationship.

Perhaps inevitably, most films are despatched in a page or two of text and the analysis is usually conventional and pedestrian. A style best characterised as serviceable is enlivened by occasional flights of alarming critical ambition. It is a surprise to find *Little Vera*'s lover described as "a Dionysian free spirit"; I had hitherto had him down as an arrogant and callous slob. But Horton and Brashinsky whet the appetite for films rarely seen in Britain, such as Vladimir Khotinenko's *A Mirror for the Hero*, Nijole Adomenaite and Boris Gorlov's *Coma*, Iurii Mamin's *Neptune's Feast* and Vagif Mustafae's *The Villain*.

Each chapter opens with a passage of contextualising background, of which the most successful relates the history of the treatment of children and young people in Soviet film and the most disappointing offers a rather confused discussion of genre. Horton and Brashinsky survey the continuous "invisible" presence of women



Disaffected youth: Natalya Negoda in 'Little Vera' (1988), Vasilii Pichul's bleak portrait of glasnost Russia

in the making of Soviet cinema, before examining the work of Kira Muratova, Nijole Adomenaite and scriptwriter Mariia Khmelik. (It is regrettable that Evgeniia Golovnia, the director of the ambitious social documentary *Limita*, is presumed to be a man named Evgenii.)

There is no indication as to how the collaboration between Horton and Brashinsky worked, but the occasional lapses of familiarity with the Russian background together with such dubious assertions as that pre-revolutionary Russian cinema "followed the European tradition submissively", or that no one in Russia seems to need genre films any more, suggest that responsibility for the text should be laid substantially at Horton's door. He is also, presumably, the author of such gems of helpful background as "Russia is undefinable and unpredictable" or "Georgia is a beautiful land in the southwest part of the Soviet Union on the coast of the Black Sea... Georgians are considered remarkable cooks and no less remarkable eaters and drinkers". Contextualising of this kind could more usefully have been supplanted by detailed analysis of the formal changes in the Film-makers' Union and studios, changes that were the catalyst to the process of glasnost, but which *The Zero Hour* deals with only perfunctorily.

The Zero Hour was finished in late 1991, after the coup, and after the demise of the Soviet Union, but too early for the far-reaching consequences of that fragmentation to be apparent. But Horton, and especially Brashinsky, in the "dialogue" they include as the book's epilogue, are alert to many of the emerging problems of post-Soviet cinema, particularly the Americanisation of the distribution system.

This is the first time that the myriad achievements of recent Soviet cinema have been written about with such breadth and energy. It is also the first collaboration between a Russian and an American critic on this scale. Not the least pleasure *The Zero Hour: Glasnost and Soviet Cinema in Transition* provides is its contrasts between Soviet and Hollywood comedy or between Russian youth films and the oeuvre of John Hughes. *Little Vera* is compared with *Something Wild* and *Desperately Seeking Susan*; Petr Todorovskiy's tale of hard-currency prostitution, *Intergirl*, with *Klute*. And the ghostly boy detective of Vadim Abdrashitov's *Plumbum* is, we learn, eager to be more than just "a miniature Clark Kent".

Setting the agenda

Brian Winston

Representing Reality

Bill Nichols, Indiana University Press,
£29.50 (cloth), £13.99 (paperback), 313pp

There has been little development in documentary film-making since the mid-70s, with prime-time success or theatrical release remaining elusive. However, Bill Nichols is right to wonder at this "remarkable" lack of interest, considering the extensive theoretical debates of this period on the nature of cinematic pleasure, the formalist issues of narrative structure or the general debate on realism. In *Representing Reality*, Nichols argues cogently for a revival of interest in this neglected area of film-making and leads off with a revised agenda for documentary theory.

Nichols expands the discussion of subjectivity by directing it unexpectedly away from the tired question of the film-maker's stance, to the issue of viewer identification. He enriches the objectivity debate by considering it in the context of the pleasure of knowing – epistephelia. He also confronts post-modernist hostility to realism, denying that it is a form of deceitful illusion and illustrating his argument by drawing a provocative comparison between filmed pornography and filmed ethnography.

But Nichols' major agenda-setting contribution is in the realm of ethics, an aspect of documentary which rarely surfaces in general film theory. His discussion of the ethical issue is firmly grounded in the films as texts and not, as is more usual, in the reconstruction of the behaviour of the film-makers. He distinguishes six ways in which the camera can look at a specific event – death – upon which he then maps a general description of the "ethics of responsibility". According to Nichols, the camera looks at death accidentally, helplessly, humanely, clinically, interventionally or dangerously. The level of the debate about documentary ethics is hereby raised several notches.

Nichols presents much of his material in diagram and list form. Sometimes, as in the discussion of ethics, this method is suggestive and helpful, but elsewhere I found it confusing. For instance, he offers a new breakdown of the documentary, making the usual divide between the traditional "expository" (voiceover) film and the post-1960 style with its subdivisions between "observational" films (direct cinema à la Wiseman) and "interactive" films (*cinéma vérité* as in Rouch's *Chronique d'un été*). But he adds a further category – the "reflexive" documentary – and includes films which themselves reflect on the processes of film-making, classically, *Man with a Movie Camera*. This turns out not to be helpful.

For instance, why is Judy and David Macdougall's ethnographic masterpiece *Lorang's Way*, a film deeply influenced by Rouch's practice, classed as reflexive not interactive? Or conversely, why is Rouch himself interactive rather than reflexive? *Far from Poland* and *Waiting for Fidel*, both about how the film-makers were unable to make the film they wanted, are classed as reflexive and interactive respectively. Voiceover for Nichols always means expository film. Yet surely the narration in *Land without Bread* is just as reflexive as the shots of Jill Godmilov

phoning Warsaw in *Far from Poland*? Even Nichols gets confused: *Poto and Cabengo* is interactive on page 47 and reflexive ten pages later.

Nichols is also fond of neologisms. Although one's heart leaps when, despite a *pro forma* flurry of quotations from Baudrillard, Foucault and Lyotard, he keeps his promise not to regurgitate other theoretician's schemas, it sinks when one discovers that the ethical chapter is dealing with something called "Axiographics". Elsewhere, he invents the term "evidentiary editing", which supposedly characterises the differences between documentary and fiction film cutting. But in my experience documentary film editors slavishly obey the fictional norms that Nichols claims they routinely ignore.

These minor problems are overshadowed by the relegation of the crucial issue of digitisation to one sentence in parenthesis and a footnote. Nichols, like all other writers in this area, locates documentary's claims to truth in "the distinctive bond between a photographic image and that of which it is a record". Unlike his predecessors, though, Nichols is too well informed not to know that this bond is under threat from digital technology. Hence the footnote and the sentence: "(Digital sampling techniques destroy this claim [of a distinctive bond]; this study is limited to nondigitised imagery.)" How does he know this? And if the issues raised by digitisation reflect back on documentary's "bond" to the real, surely they deserve more than this cursory treatment?

But even this omission does not detract from the scale of Nichols' achievement in this scholarly and ambitious work. He has written a road-block of a book which reconfigures the debate on the documentary at a new level of sophistication and complexity which can only be ignored at the risk of ignoring the whole area of documentary film.

In the pink

Andy Medhurst

George Cukor: A Double Life

Patrick McGilligan, Faber & Faber, £16.99, 404pp

George Cukor has never been a director favoured by those who like their auteurs wild-eyed and edgy. He was neither a rebel nor a maverick, and was far from despising the system for which he produced one impeccably civilised success after another. The biography of such a conformist, however diligently detailed, might have been dull, but, as signalled by the rather obvious subtitle, McGilligan explores a life lived on two levels – Cukor's public face, and the homosexuality it concealed. The real fascination of Cukor's work, and the theme which quite properly preoccupies this book, is whether or not these two ostensibly separate worlds fed off and into each other. After all, queer film directors are hardly rare, but it isn't every queer film director who gave us *Sylvia Scarlett* (1936), *Camille* (1936) or *A Star is Born* (1954).

The question of coded homosexual authorship within classic Hollywood remains murky, treacherous and fascinating. Here, says McGilligan, is the life, and

there are the films. However we may want to connect them is pretty well up to us. And, needless to say, making some kind of connection is irresistible. Cukor's celebrated affinity with female stars, his preference for verbal articulacy over visual effects, the return in film after film to issues of theatricality, and the recurring, teasing suggestion that sexual identity is fluid rather than fixed – all of these could be called on as evidence that Cukor's sexuality in some way contributed to his way of seeing the world.

Almost any title from the filmography illustrates the point, but it is improbable that a heterosexual director could have presided over any of the three mentioned above. Think of Garland's transcendent delivery of 'The Man That Got Away', or of Garbo's shimmering luminosity, or of those electrifying moments of queer wit that



Greta Garbo in a luminous performance as *The Lady of the Camellias* in 'Camille', George Cukor's 1936 version of the Alexandre Dumas story

momentarily blind us to the fact that *Sylvia Scarlett* is on the whole a fairly comprehensive mess. Similarly *Holiday* (1938), one of the most beautifully poised and poignant films to come out of Hollywood (and one of my own desert-island choices), offers the Utopian possibility of a society free from social and sexual hierarchies and is made movingly believable by Cukor, Grant and Hepburn all working at the peak of their powers. These films are central texts in the history of the relationship between gay people and popular mainstream cinema.

George Cukor: A Double Life is a fittingly elegant survey of the life and work, but it is surely only the first fully informed work on Cukor rather than the last. McGilligan has done the spadework with insight and sensitivity, opening the way for more inspirationally reckless readings. It's perfectly plausible, after all, to construct a case for Cukor as one of the major homosexual artists of the century; not one of the honesty-at-all-costs campaigners, but a man who, like his friends Cole Porter and Noël Coward, was far too happy with the comforts of the good life to rock the socio-sexual boat in any overt way. But he undeniably ran several shocking pink flags up the mast – at least to those in the know.

Thanks to McGilligan, it is now no longer possible *not* to be in the know, and any future account of Cukor's career must take his sexuality as one of its starting points. The thinly veiled homophobia that labelled him the 'woman's director' and consequently ranked him below all those big, tough he-men of the auteurist canon can now, I hope, be forgotten forever.

shorts

The Screenplay's the Thing: Movie Criticism 1986-1990

Bruce Bawer, Shoe String/Archon Books, \$29.50, 298pp

● Bawer, who describes himself as a "serious literary critic", was given *carte blanche* at *The American Spectator* to write about movies and movie-related topics. Eschewing catchphrase criticism, Bawer looks for the moral centre of the films he writes about and rails against the Pauline Kael school of criticism. *Top Gun* gets the thumbs down for "formulaic" film-making. Thumbs up for *Big*, a "delightful comedy". *Henry V* is "too loud". *Beautiful Laundrette* "the product of a sophisticated moral sensibility" and of *Drugstore Cowboy* he exclaims, "Finally, a movie whose characters we can all identify with!"

Academy Award Winners

Ronald Bergen, Graham Fuller and David Malcolm, Prion, £18.95, 344pp

● A pictorial history of the Academy Awards 1927-1991. Easy reading with lots of lists, anecdotes and film synopses written up in coffee-table style for a general film-going public. The thrills and spills of the Oscar ceremonies retold in a blow-by-blow account of each year's proceedings. Learn how Bob Hope lusted after "the bookend with the sneer" or how Joanne Woodward collected her 1957 Best Actress Award for *The Three Faces of Eve* in a home-made gown, an incident reported by the authors to be "unique in the ceremony's history".

Media Education in the Primary School

Carol E. Craggs, Routledge, £35.00 (cloth), £9.99 (paper), 185pp

● Now that media studies is officially part of the National Curriculum, teachers will welcome this useful introduction. Craggs' book takes as its educational starting-point Piagetian theories of heuristic learning to develop notions of visual literacy in the classroom. Practical tips for teachers (how to make a pin-hole camera/suggestions for worksheets) and case studies taken from Craggs' own teaching experience introduce deconstructionist theories of the news, advertising, soap operas, documentary and the media institutions themselves.

Marilyn's Men: The Private Life of Marilyn Monroe

Jane Ellen Wayne, Robson Books, £16.95, 241pp

Marilyn: The Last Take:

A Dual Murder Conspiracy Revealed

Peter Brown and Patte Barham, Heinemann, £17.50, 498pp

● Two more offerings to coincide with the thirtieth anniversary of Monroe's death. The popular market has two angles on Marilyn Monroe: Jane Ellen Wayne, biographer to the stars, goes for one of them and gives us a book of titbits and gossip revelling in such information as Marilyn's numerous abortions (thirteen or fourteen at the final count) and relying heavily on the testimony of Marilyn's friend and lover, Bob Slatzer, who, it is claimed, was briefly married to Monroe in 1952. Brown and Barham go for the 'conspiracy' angle, which implicates both John and Bobby Kennedy in Monroe's death. But the bigger villain is the Fox Studio, who "deliberately plotted against the most important and commercial star in the studio's long history", sacrificing *Something's Got to Give* for *Cleopatra* in a frenzy of boardroom clashes. Both books take the 'Marilyn-as-victim' line, skirting awkwardly around the star's notorious 'temperament' and her excessive need for sexual love.

REVIEWS

Reviews,
synopses and
full credits for
all the month's
new films

Les Amants du Pont-Neuf

France 1991

Director: Leos Carax

Certificate

18

Distributor

Artificial Eye
Production Company
Christian Fechner
Productions

Executive Producers

Bernard Artigues
Hervé Truffaut
Albert Prévost

Producer

Christian Fechner
Associate Producer
Alain Dahan

Production Co-ordinator

Philippe Levy

Production Managers

Charles Ferron
Nicolas Daguet

Location Managers

Omar Yousfi
Loys Cappatti
Samuel Agrippino
Bernard Schmidt

Post-production

Catherine Adart

Production Staff

Malak Hamzaoui
Arnaud de Moleron
Sophie Quideville
Remy Pradinas
Michel Babaud
Eric Bensoussan
Alexis Bernier
Cyril Duval
Isabelle Estager
Yves Lhermitte
Patrice Monier
Julien Morières
Michelle Grimaud
Clementine Thomas
Nathalie Rémy

Assistant Directors

Gabriel Julien

Laferrière

Fawzi Kasri

Ketal Guenin

Screenplay

Leos Carax

Director of Photography

Jean-Yves Escoffier

In colour

Steadicam Operator

Marc Koninek

Animation

Xavier Miclet

Pierre Neuveglise

Jean-Pierre Langrée

Raymond Sarti

Jean-Charles

Guilleminot

Jean-Louis Vales

François Barbot

Jean-Marc Cordaro

Stéphane Martin

Marie José Broulon

Laurent Allet Bellul

Editor

Nelly Quettier

Art Director

Michel Vandestien

Set Decorators

Olivier Pace

Patrice Dubois

Dauphin

Yvon Frémy

Pascal Ciccone

Fabienne Hubinet

Christian Herchuel

Sculptures

Jean-Marc Tournois

Special Effects

Jack Dubus

Skiing:

Gilbert Perri

Explosion:

Jean-Louis Trinquier

Prow Figure:

Marianne Lamour

Consultant:

Elie Poicard

Pyrotechnics

Société E. Lacroix

Patrick Decourt

Models

Jean-Louis Le Breton

Music Extracts

"Cantus in Memory
of Benjamin Britten"
performed by The
Stuttgart Orchestra;

"Variations on a Theme
of Frank Bridge Opus
10" by Benjamin
Britten, performed
by The Bournemouth
Symphony Orchestra;

"An der Schönen
Blauen Donau"
by Johann Strauss,
performed by The
Orchestra of
Amsterdam; "Sonata
for Cello Solo Opus 8"

by Zoltan Kodaly,
performed by Chrichan
Larson; "Chamber
Music for String
Quartet No. 3 in F,
Opus 73" by Dimitri
Shostakovich,

performed by The
Fitzwilliam String
Quartet; "Concerto for
Twelve Cellos" by Einar
Englund, performed
by Finnish Cello
Ensemble; "Suite
de Danses Rituelles"

performed by The
Principle Drummers
of Burundi

Songs
"Les Amants" by
Catherine Ringer,
Fred Chichin,
performed by Les Rita
Mitsouko; "Time Will
Crawl" by and
performed by David
Bowie; "Strong Girl" by
and performed by Iggy
Pop; "You're Gonna Get
Yours" by Ridenhour,
Schocklee, performed
by Public Enemy;

"Mains de Velours",
"Romanella" by and
performed by Jo Privat;
"Jayebi Salam", "Ya
Saken Elali" by Assy,
Mansour Rambany,
Ph. Wembe, performed
by Fairquz; "Harke
Harke" by Tobias,
Hume, performed
by Jerdi Savali;

"Byte of the Devil"
by and performed
by Gilles Tinyare

Choreography
Martine Rodriguez

Acrobatics
Alexandre Del Perugia

Costume Design
Robert Nardone

Wardrobe
Danielle Gros

Make-up
Valérie Tranier

Sound Editor
Nadine Muse

Sound Recordist
Henri Morelle

Sound re-recordists
Laurent Levy

Music:
William Flageollet

Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Francis Perreard

Sound re-recordists
François Groult
Gérard Lamps

Stunts
Jean-Louis Airola

Dany Roca
Subtitles
Laser Subtitling
Titres Paris

Cast
Juliette Binoche
Michèle
Denis Lavant
Alex
Klaus-Michael Gruber
Hans
Daniel Buaïn
Clochard's Friend
Marion Statens
Marion
Chrichan Larson
Julien
Paulette Berthonnier
Roger Berthonnier
Sailors
Edith Scob
Georges Apperighis
Couple in the Car
Michel Vandestien
Pompous Man

Georges Casterp
Marc Desclozeaux
Alain Dahan
Pierre Pessemesse
Maître Bitoun
Johnny Aldama
Sleepers
Jean-Louis Airola
Bill Sticker
Albert Prévost
Commissaire
Marc Maurette
Judge
and the Voice of
Marie Trintignant

11,319 feet
126 minutes

Subtitles

Paris, summer 1989. A drunken young punk, Alex, is hit by a car on the boulevard Sebastopol and taken to the Nanterre night refuge for down-and-outs where he is given a shower and a bed among fellow tramps. Back on his patch on the Pont-Neuf, which is closed for repairs, he finds that the space he shares with the older Hans is also occupied by the sleeping Michèle, a dishevelled young artist who drew portraits of Alex while he was lying on the road the night before.

Michèle, who suffers from a degenerative eye disease and wears an eye patch, has left her middle-class home to keep drawing before she goes blind. Against Hans' wishes, Alex insists that she stay, and falls desperately in love with her. She too is drawn to Alex though in a more ambiguous way; her own obsession is evidently with a young male cellist whose portrait she used to draw.

She stays on the bridge and spends the summer with Alex, with Hans as an increasingly friendly onlooker. There follow a number of loosely connected episodes - Alex and Michèle drinking cheap red wine, riding the Métro, stealing money from rich male tourists, escaping to the sea, Hans and Michèle visiting the Louvre at night - culminating in Alex and Michèle's exuberant escapades during the French

Revolution bicentenary celebrations on Bastille night.

Michèle wants to return to a more conventional life after the summer, but Alex attempts to keep her to himself. He engineers the loss of their substantial loot from the tourists and shields her from her father's news, displayed through posters pasted all over Paris, that a cure has been found for her eye disease. In the process, he accidentally kills a bill sticker and is sent to jail where he reforms. Meanwhile, Michèle is cured and lives with an eye specialist.

She visits Alex in jail and agrees to meet him after his release. But on a snowy night on the bridge, she announces that she is not yet ready to be reunited with him. Alex attacks her and they fall into the Seine from which they are rescued by a passing barge. They decide to stay on board until the barge reaches its final destination in Le Havre.

To make a film about Paris in 1991 is inevitably to quote the déjà vu. There is hardly a landmark in Paris left unexamined by a major painter, photographer, novelist, songwriter or film-maker. The Pont-Neuf itself has been celebrated by Renoir (père), Pissarro and Monet, among others. Since the very first silent films, French cinema, especially the New Wave, has repeatedly focused on everyday aspects of life in the city, turning the boulevards, courtyards and cafés into a giant playground. Leos Carax is hardly unaware of this heritage. The Pont-Neuf of his third feature is spectacularly displayed both as a real location and as a set, becoming a metonym for the whole city.

Alex and Michèle are the familiar French lovers-as-children-on-the-run, nurtured by the maternal city which houses, feeds and entertains them, most spectacularly during the Bastille night celebrations. This is the climax of the film in a cinematic as well as



Down and out in a giant playground: Denis Lavant

narrative sense, the erotically charged histrionics of the lovers matching the grandiose state display, a bravura parade of sounds and images, filmic fireworks of breathtaking virtuosity.

Such moments support the lavish critical praise heaped on Carax in France. *Cahiers du cinéma* has hailed him as the "best contemporary French film-maker" and an entire issue of the journal was recently devoted to *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf*, illustrated with Juliette Binoche's own paintings. In terms of the *Cahiers* ethos, Carax has all the attributes of the perfect auteur: his work displays not only a consistency of theme (*amour fou*) and cast (Denis Lavant in all three films, echoing the Truffaut-Léaud pairing, and Juliette Binoche in two), but is also ciné-literate (*Les Amants du Pont-Neuf* drops many references, from Chaplin's *City Lights* to Vigo's *L'Atalante*). His slight 'boy-meets-girl' plots are secondary to a *mise en scène* which is both tightly controlled – particularly in its use of long takes – and deliriously abandoned. Carax's struggle to make *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf*, against all odds and on one of the highest French film budgets ever, feeds into the romantic myth of the *artiste maudit*, and Carax's well-publicised relationship with Juliette Binoche puts him firmly in a long line of other European directors.

Unexpectedly, in view of the foregoing, *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf* also contains moments of startling realism, especially in the opening sequence among the down-and-outs which was shot on location with real tramps, ciné-vérité style. But *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf* is about the romance of existential choice not stark socio-economic realities, hence the rapid relocation from dreary Nanterre to the beauty of the Pont-Neuf. Tramp-dom, then, is just a metaphor for marginality in the same way as Michèle's near-blindness is exploited for its melodramatic potential and not as a statement about disability. It is primarily a pretext for metaphor and allusion, drawing on obvious sources in the visual arts and more obscure erotic literary references such as Georges Bataille's *Story of the Eye*. Similarly, Michèle's 'ugliness' is only fairy-tale, a mask which, when shed at the end of the film, serves only to reveal more forcefully her stunning beauty.

Ultimately, the problem with Carax's film is one of mis-match between exciting and innovative aesthetics and conservative politics, particularly in the area of gender. *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf* is yet another story of 'transparent' male desire – graphically illustrated by Denis Lavant's erection in the beach scene – for a beautiful but opaque young woman. At the same time, *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf* is one of the most visually exhilarating and surprising films of recent years, a true 'cinema of attractions' with music, colour, dazzling camerawork, melodramatic coincidences and *tour de force* performances from Lavant and Binoche.

Ginette Vincendeau

Bob Roberts

USA 1992

Director: Tim Robbins

Certificate

15
Distributor
Rank
Production Companies
Polygram/
Working Title (US)
In association with
Barry Levinson and
Mark Johnson/Live
Entertainment
Executive Producers
Ronna Wallace
Paul Webster
Tim Bevan
Producer
Forrest Murray
Associate Producers
James Bigwood
Allan Nicholls
Production Supervisor
Rudd Simmons
Production Co-ordinator
Kitty Olisky
LA Office Co-ordinator
Clarissa Troop
Unit Manager
Mark Seldis
Location Manager
Judy Matthews
Post-production Supervisor
Susan Lazarus
Casting
Douglas Aibel
LA:
April Webster
Pittsburgh:
Canice Kennedy
Extras:
Linda Corrolla
Assistant Directors
Maria Melograne
Fred Donatelli
Steve Day
Screenplay
Tim Robbins
Director of Photography
Jean Lépine
Colour
Technicolor
Additional Insert
Photography
Balsmeyer & Everett
Steadicam Operator
Rick Raphael
Video
Design:
Brian Campbell
Playback:
Jim Emswiler
Location Editor:
Mark Patterson
Stage Visual Effects
Steidl Balzer
Graphics
Witalis Burke
Associates
Editor
Lisa Churgin
Associate Editor
Donna Stern
Production Designer
Richard Hoover
Art Director
Gary Kosko
Art Department
Co-ordinator
John Lindsey
McCormick
Set Decorator
Brian Kasch
Key Set Dresser
Mary Buri
Set Dressers
Lisa Kruczek
Jennifer Baum
Jeffrey Becer
Sarah J. Burt
John N. Butler
Dave Langley
Craig Glaser
Gregory E. Jones
Kenneth Kellers
Slide Show Storyboard Artist
Kathleen McKernin

Music

David Robbins
Music Performed by
Viola:
Novi Novog
Drums:
Scott Jackson
Keyboard:
Henry Brewer
Cello:
John Hagen
Mandolin:
Bob Applebaum
Bass:
Larry Tuttle
Electric Bass:
Leland Sklar
Percussion:
James Gilmer
Ernesto Salcedo
Guitars:
David Robbins
Vocals/Harmonica:
Tim Robbins
Background Vocals:
Jack Black
David Robbins
Bob's On-stage Band:
Dennis Childers
Warren Davidson
John Hagen
Greg Sheer
Music Editor
Patrick Mullins
Songs
"What Did the Teacher
Tell You", "This Land",
"Beautiful Girl",
"Complain", "I Want
to Live", "This World
Turns" by David
Robbins, Tim Robbins;
"Wall Street Rap" by
David Robbins, Tim
Robbins, additional
vocals by Angela Hall;
"Prevailing Tides" by
David Robbins, Tim
Robbins, performed
by Gabrielle Robbins;
"Drugs Stink", "We Are
Marching" by David
Robbins, Tim Robbins,
additional vocals;
guitar by Kelly Willis;
"Times Are Changin'
Back", "Retake
America" by David
Robbins, Tim Robbins,
performed by The
Chatham College
Choir, The Shady
Side Men's Choir;
"I've Got to Know"
by and performed
by Woody Guthrie
Costume Design
Bridget Kelly
Wardrobe Supervisor
Diane Collins
Make-up Artists
Jeanne Josefczyk
Additional:
Rachael H. Kick
Linda Williams
Sharyn Pierson
Titles/Opticals
The Effects House
Corp.
Michael Ventresco
John Alagna
Supervising Sound Editor
Marshall Grupp
Sound Editor
Laura Civiello
ADR Editor
Hal Levinsohn
Sound Recordists
Stephen Halbert
2nd Unit:
Stephen Zelenko
Music:
Jeff Frickman
ADR Recordists
Paul J. Zydel
Bob Olari

Foley Recordist

Paul J. Zydel
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Rick Dior
Michael Cerone
Vocal Effects
David Sharp's Totally
Looped Group
Foley Walker
Nancy Cabrera
Vocal/Choral Consultant
Gil Robbins
Production Assistants
Edward Buerkle
Douglas Durose
Rico Gagliano
John Gresko
Amy Hughes
Keith Jackson
Craig Jones
Karen Marks
Christopher Muchow
Jolene Szloff
Shawn Vashaw
Mimi Wyeth
Post-production:
Virginia Biddle
Ann Moore
Tim Ticehurst
Stunts
Don Hewitt
Jery Hewitt
Fencing Masters
Charles Leavitt
Peter Farquar

Cast

Tim Robbins
Bob Roberts
Giancarlo Esposito
Bugs Raplin
Alan Rickman
Lukas Hart III
Ray Wise
Chet MacGregor
Brian Murray
Terry Manchester
Gore Vidal
Senator Brickley Paiste
Rebecca Jenkins
Delores Perrigrew
Harry J. Lennix
Franklin Dockett
John Ottavino
Clark Anderson
Robert Stanton
Bart Mackderooney
Kelly Willis
Clarissa Fan
Tom Atkins
Dr Caleb Menck
Merrilee Dale
Polly Roberts
David Strathairn
Mack Laffin,
Bugs' Attorney
Scranton:
James Spader
Chuck Marlin,
News Anchor
Pamela Reed
Carol Cruise,
News Anchor
Helen Hunt
Rose Pondell,
Hospital Reporter
Eva Amurri
Child in Hospital
Jim West
Bus Driver
Philadelphia:
Peter Gallagher
Dan Riley, Morning
News Anchor
Lynne Thigpen
Kelly Noble
Bingo O'Malley
Robert Roberts Snr
Kathleen Chalfant
Constance Roberts
Ruth Lesko
Schoolteacher
Harrisburg:
Jack Black
Roger Davis
Anita Gillette
Mrs Davis, Mayor's
Wife
Matthew Faber
Calvin
Matt McGrath
Burt
Pittsburgh:
Susan Sarandon
Tawna Titan, News
Anchor

Fred Ward

Chip Daley, News
Anchor
Charles Altman
Debate Moderator
Altoona:
Shannon Holt
Rita, Obsessed Fan
Staci Marcum
Miss Philadelphia
Penn State:
Shira Pivin
Steve Pink
Penn State Protestors
Fisher Stevens
Rock Bork, Reporter
Gil Robbins
Reverend Best
Angela Hall
Choir Soloist
Lee Robbins
Organ Player
New York:
John Cusack
Cutting Edge Host
Bob Balaban
Michael Janes,
Cutting Edge Producer
Allan Nicholls
Cutting Edge Director
June Stein
Carol
Adam Simon
Head Writer
Ned Bellamy
Uzi Kornhauser
Natalie Strong
Kala Kornhauser
Burnice Brouman
Nurse
Pat Logan
Policeman
Larry John Meyers
Police Spokesman
Robert Hegyes
Ernesto Galleano,
Reporter
Tom Tully
Anthony Dileo Jr
Jane Crawford
Ann Taiman
Lamont Arnold
NY Reporters
Gabrielle Robbins
Singing Vigilante
Adele Robbins
Brian Powell
Paul Quinn
Dean Robinson
Jeffrey Foster
Vigilantes
Jeremy Piven
Bif, Patriot
Lee Arenberg
Religious Zealot
David Sinalfo
Liberal
Washington, D.C.:
Brent Hinkley
Bif, Patriot
Hal O'Leary
Senator Haydn
Don Brockett
Chairman
Linda King
D.C. Reporter

9,334 feet
104 minutes

A documentary on American politician and folk singer Bob Roberts, made by British film-maker Terry Manchester, begins in October 1990, as Roberts is campaigning for a seat as a Pennsylvania senator. Roberts preaches – in song and speech – an anti-drugs message, and heads an anti-drugs organisation called Broken Dove; he also sings the virtues of acquisitiveness and the joys of wealth. Manchester's film traces Roberts' past – his childhood in an early 60s commune, and his rebellion against his parents that led him to military academy, Yale and Wall Street.

Flanked by campaign adviser Lukas Hart III and aide Chet MacGregor, Roberts travels the country giving concerts and speeches, while a team of aides trades bonds for him in his mobile office. Roberts' rival, long-standing Democrat Senator Brickley Paiste, is implicated in an apparently rigged scandal connecting him with a teenage girl. Hart, a former CIA man, has been involved in the Iran-Contra hearings that link him with South American drug connections, but was exonerated.

Roberts is meanwhile being pursued by radical journalist Bugs Raplin, of *Troubled Times* newspaper, who wants to expose Roberts and his aides. Raplin tells Manchester that Broken Dove, before its current incarnation, had been using transport planes for drug smuggling. Thanks to Raplin, news breaks about money being improperly appropriated from a Savings and Loans fund to finance drug smuggling, and Hart is subpoenaed. Roberts appears on a liberal TV satire show *Cutting Edge Live*, following the intervention of the network's new owners, which causes a walkout by the show's host and an assistant who pulls the plugs on Roberts.

In an incident after the show, Roberts appears to be shot and Raplin is arrested. The apparently crippled Roberts becomes a media martyr of the New Right, but Raplin insists that Roberts was not shot at all. Charges are dropped against Hart, Roberts' new record – promoted by a video with a War of Independence theme – goes to No. 1, and Roberts wins the Senate seat. Raplin is freed after evidence points to the gun being planted on him, but is subsequently shot dead.

Bob Roberts ends with a pan around the inscription on the Jefferson Monument: Thomas Jefferson's declaration of war on those who impose "tyranny against the minds of men". The film surely lacks confidence in its own warlike efforts if it needs to underline its point so brutally, and this pinpoints a crisis of current liberal rhetoric in the States. It can be taken as an article of faith that the Right asserts its power by manipulating facts and media, but the paranoid counterblasts of conspiracy narrative – of which the supreme example is *JFK* – are inevitably caught in a double-bind. They aim to expose the tyranny against the mind, but in attempting to counter- ▶



Dylan back-track: Tim Robbins

◀ manipulate, they use the enemy's own weapons, a tactic that exposes them to a charge of bad faith.

In the case of *JFK*, that bad faith is glaring; rarely was such a blatantly manipulative film made by Left or Right, hence Oliver Stone's get-out claim that he was trying to create a counter-myth to the official one. *Bob Roberts* is less ambitious, but the problem is similar. It wants to manipulate its audience with satire, but for fear of being thought manipulative, it cops out by telling us point blank what to think. It makes its satirical point with leaden force, telling us at the start that Roberts is variously thought to be "a mover and a shaker... a people person" and "a crypto-fascist clown", or following Paiste's calls for childcare and healthcare with Roberts haranguing an audience, "Why can't you have the home of your dreams?" In case we're in any doubt, Paiste even detects a "whiff of sulphur" in the air.

The film also works on our automatic responses to a number of cultural clichés. Foremost is the pseudo-documentary form itself. Robert Altman's presidential TV satire *Tanner '88* – with which this film shares cinematographer Jean Lépine – is the obvious model, but *Bob Roberts* is closer to *This Is Spinal Tap* as a repository for a succession of harmless in-jokes. The 'documentary' is in any case hopelessly uneven – it is introduced by doddering English talking head Terry Manchester, whose coverage oscillates between an investigative exposé of Roberts and a Whicker-like indulgence of him, so benign as to be slavish. Manchester's film means, finally, whatever Robbins' film requires it to mean at a given moment.

Roberts himself is composed of a number of ideological folk demons, which coalesce in such vague form that he signifies nothing. Bob is not a meaningful blank, 'all things to all men', but a messy conglomerate of specific evils. He is a dash of Gordon Gecko, a dollop of Ollie North's Johnny Appleseed persona, and a yuppie salmagundi of country music's red-neck dynasty – from Andy Griffiths in *A Face in the Crowd* to Henry Gibson's patriotic demagogue Haven Hamilton in *Nashville*. But the film is unsure quite on what grounds we should mistrust Bob first – should it be for his smiling

face and suspiciously crisp white shirt, for his reactionary snubbing of his proto-hippy parents, or must he sing his crass anthems to cupidity before we get the message?

Few American politicians – even the recently debased Perot – are this lacking in subtlety; the film, however, is. It gives us two MTV video parodies, one simplistic, the other too tricky for its own good. After the shooting, Roberts issues a grotesquely triumphalist ballad about fighting on regardless, and in the video appears as a War of Independence officer fending off a shot in the back from a subversive-longhair stereotype. The other, more convincingly MTV-styled, features a poker-faced Bob holding up cue cards with the words of a rap based on Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues", ironically co-opting the language of black power: "By any means/Necessary/Make millions". What is not clear is whether the joke is meant to be Bob's or the film's. If Bob's, what point is he making in this elaborately ironic gesture? If it is the film's, the joke simply makes no coherent sense.

The film's lack of articulate conviction seems inextricably tied up with its lament for the fall of a committed American Left. The film's representatives of the Left have no clear identity. At points, they come across as plain-speaking folk who see clear through the mystifications of the Right – the host and the assistant on *Cutting Edge Live*, the black woman TV host who denounces Roberts off-camera as being "Like Nixon, but shrewder", and Gore Vidal, who at some points appears to address camera out of character, as himself. Elsewhere, such figures seem to be lampooned as well-meaning but outmoded, at sea in Bob's bright, Right new world.

Foremost, perhaps, the film laments the passing – or co-opting – of radical pop culture itself. Bob's act is a grotesque reversal of 60s protest singing – of Dylan, whose LP sleeves his own parody with numbing literalness, but even more of Phil Ochs, a more radical, explicit and adept ironist than Dylan, and who allegedly died as a martyr to CIA dirty tricks. What the film finally points to is a crisis in political satire, and its self-congratulatory tilts at MTV can ultimately be seen as the film's recognition of its own complicity in the culture it bemoans.

Challenging radical satire is possible, but it demands a complexity that mainstream cinema effectively outlawed. Compare Craig Baldwin's *Tribulation 99*, a rapid-fire assemblage of pulp-movie and political footage with mock sci-fi commentary – a complex collage of truths and lies that disorients the audience and thus challenges it to construct its own indictment of US foreign policy. In *Bob Roberts*, we have no work to do – we are simply shoved in the right direction. Raplin says at one point, "If you want the truth in this country, you must seek it out". *Bob Roberts* hardly invites its public to do any seeking of any kind.

Jonathan Romney

Cousin Bobby

USA 1992

Director: Jonathan Demme

Certificate

(Not yet issued)

Distributor

Electric Pictures

Production Company

Tesaro

Producer

Edward Saxon

Associate Producer

Valerie Thomas

Lucas Platt

Directors of Photography

Ernest Dickerson

Craig Haagenen

Tony Jannelli

Jacek Laskus

Declan Quinn

In colour

Optical Effects

Eastern Optical Effects

Editor

David Greenwald

Associate Editor

Li-Shin Yu

Music

Anton Sanko

Music Co-ordinators

Barklie Griggs

Jennifer Richardson

Dana Sano

Songs

"Blackman in Effect" by

and performed by KRS-

1; "Brother Man" by D.

Hollowell, J. Hampton,

T. Rhonshouse,

performed by Euro K;

"Soft Shoe Booty" by

Sun Born, Troy Depula.

"Pure Energy" by

Sun Born, J. Mahs,

performed by King

Sun; "Can I Start This"

by Wise Intelligent,

Troy Depula, performed

by Poor Righteous

Teachers; "My Father's

Footsteps" by Joseph

Robins, performed

by Butch Robins

Titles

M&Co

Sound Design

C5

Sound Recordists

Judy Karp

J. T. Takagi

Pam Yates

Sound Re-recordist

Tommy Fleischman

Genealogical Assistance

Robert E. Demme

Production Assistants

Miguel Arteta

Kristin Bash

Gray Beverly

Tim Cahill

Parnes Cartwright

Luke Joerger

Kevin McLeod

Bennett Miller

Brian Smith

Ian Sowers

Joe Tazewell

Loretta Farb

Jillian Harris

6,210 feet

69 minutes

Jonathan Demme recounts how he re-established contact with his cousin, Robert Castle, who had been his childhood hero but with whom he had lost touch for over thirty years. Bobby has become an Episcopalian priest, working in Harlem. We see him preaching in his church, addressing open-air meetings to

denounce the neglect and squalor of the local community, leading parades against drugs, and pleading for understanding and co-operation between the different races and religions.

Interspersed with these events are comments about Bobby from his colleagues and parishioners, scenes of the family reunion held on his sixtieth birthday, photographs and home movies of his (and Demme's) family, and reminiscences by Bobby and others about his childhood and parents. Bobby also recalls the Black Panther leader, Isaiah Rawley, who exerted a strong influence over his own beliefs. The film ends with newsreel footage of riots, and their aftermath, in American cities, going back to the Watts riots of 1965.

As a director, Jonathan Demme has never been easy to slot into any neat category, and it's characteristic that he should follow the Oscar-winning box-office hit of *Silence of the Lambs* with a low-budget, hand-held documentary about a radical New York priest. Alone among mainstream American film-makers (the nearest parallel, perhaps, would be Louis Malle), Demme relishes commuting regularly between documentary and fiction – "two very different kinds of unique discipline", as he describes them, which can nevertheless often pirate each other's techniques, "so it's very schizophrenic for me. And fun".

In his documentaries as in his features (and here again the comparison with Malle holds good), Demme hates to repeat himself. His tally so far includes *Stop Making Sense* (Talking Heads in one of the finest of rock-concert movies), the Spalding Gray monologue *Swimming to Cambodia*, and films on Sun City and the beleaguered



A message to any government: Reverend Robert Castle

democratic movement in Haiti. What they all share, though, is Demme's seemingly effortless knack of knowing just where to put his camera and for how long – and the same goes for *Cousin Bobby*.

Early on in the film, Demme follows the Reverend Robert Castle as he transports his entire church – altar, cross, congregation and all – out on to the streets of Harlem to inveigh against the contemptuous indifference of City Hall. As the priest stands in full canonicals, gesturing dramatically to a pot-hole the size of a small swimming-pool, Demme takes in behind him, without undue emphasis, the weary, cynical faces of the attendant cops and a dilapidated building marked EPART ENT OF EALTH. It's a telling glimpse of the dead weight of neglect and inertia Cousin Bobby and his enthused supporters are up against.

Even so, *Cousin Bobby* is anything but a depressing film. Part of its warmth comes from Robert Castle himself, described by one of his parishioners as "the most generous, sharing, loving, giving man I ever met". An oddly uncharismatic figure to look at – thick-set, stooped, balding in a messy, tufted way – and no great phrase-maker, he convinces by the sheer vehemence of his compassion, speaking of children whose "joy is stolen from them", or recalling with palpable grief seeing a woman leap to her death from a fire in a jerrybuilt tenement. At the same time, he shows a shrewd awareness of his own carefully nurtured image as a dissident: "I used to fear the local paper would say something too nice about me and I'd lose my credibility".

The film's other chief element, crossing and interweaving with its street-wise politics, is Demme's own process of rediscovery – of his cousin, and of his whole fragmented family. *Cousin Bobby* was shot over an eighteen-month period, and its events are presented out of chronological order, yet we never lose the sense of the director's growing joy at this newly reinvigorated network of family ties. In one of the film's most moving sequences, Demme and his cousin sit together on the steps of the priest's childhood home, while Bobby relives the memory of his father's death.

Just occasionally, there's a feeling that things are being skated over. We hear little from Bobby's ex-wife, or from his children, and nothing of why the marriage broke up: though there's a hint that his family, as often happens with men of conscience, found themselves well back in the queue for his attention. But the very fact that such questions are prompted is an indication of how closely Demme has involved us in his film. *Cousin Bobby*'s final sequence of angry, despairing faces, wrecked lives and gutted buildings spells out an unmistakable message to any government with the sense to read it: there aren't many people around like Robert Castle, and this is the alternative.

Philip Kemp

Hitler, ein Film aus Deutschland (Hitler, a Film from Germany)

West Germany 1977

Director: Hans Jürgen Syberberg

Distributor
BFI
Production Company
TMS Film
In association with
Solaris-Film/WDR/
Institut National de
l'Audiovisuel/BBC
Producer
Hans Jürgen Syberberg
Production Supervisor
Harry Nap
Production Managers
Bernd Eichinger
Ike Werk
Assistant Directors
Gerhard von Halem
Michael Sedevy
Screenplay
Hans Jürgen Syberberg
Director of Photography
Dietrich Lohmann
Colour
Eastman Colour
Editor
Jutta Brandstaedter
Production Designer
Hans Gailling
Special Effects
Theo Nischwitz
Charly Baumgartner
Puppets
Barbara Buchwald
Hans M. Stummer
Masks
Gerlinde Kunz
Music
Richard Wagner
Gustav Mahler
Ludwig van Beethoven
Wolfgang Amadeus

Mozart
Joseph Haydn
Costume Design
Barbara Gailling
Sound Editor
Heymo Henry Heider
Sound Recorder
Wilhelm Schwadorf

Cast
Heinz Schubert
Adolf Hitler/Heinrich
Himmler
André Heller
Master of Ceremonies
Hellmuth Lange
Hitler's Valet
Annelie Syberberg
Girl in Black
Harry Baer
Ventriloquist
Peter Kern
Ex-Nazi
Peter Lühr
Rainer von Ardenfels
Peter Moland
Martin Sperr
Johannes Buzalski
Alfred Edel

Part 1: 8,597 feet
96 minutes
Part 2: 11,887 feet
132 minutes
Part 3: 8,742 feet
97 minutes
Part 4: 9,394 feet
104 minutes

Subtitles

Part 1: *Der Gral/The Grail*: On an empty stage, a back projection of Mad King Ludwig's Munich residence appears, while a voice-off delivers the customary disclaimer about all events and characters in this film being fictional. A young girl in black, playing with dolls, puts to bed a toy dog with the face of Hitler. The Master of Ceremonies announces the end of the world, "the greatest show on earth", and from inside the "Black Maria", Edison's first film studio, Ludwig reminds us that we all need scapegoats.

The MC calls upon his actors to present themselves, and each one plays Hitler: as a house painter, as Frankenstein, as Nero, as Charlie Chaplin. Everyone can play Hitler; must play Hitler. From out of their coffins, the Nazi leaders emerge as puppets on strings: Goebbels, Goering, Himmler and Speer justify and explain themselves. Hitler, it emerges, is too evil for Hell, and so has to stay on earth, though the question remains as to what form he will take. The MC makes some guesses as to Hitler's present incarnations: from newsreels showing Hitler's election victory and Nazi judges in action, the catalogue moves to German film-makers then and now, an inflatable sex doll, a blackboard with names of film critics, McCarthyism, Hollywood, coffee-table books

about Nazi victories, Hitler memorabilia. To the side, the girl in black is cradling her Ludwig doll.

Part 2: *Ein deutscher Traum/A German Dream*: The Black Maria is now covered in snow inside a glass bubble, which turns into a gigantic eye, where the figure of Karl May can be seen ascending to Heaven, while Ludwig's death is once more enacted. A model German town appears in a sand-box, gradually covered with snow. Peering down on his childhood world, Karl May remembers his life and how he dreamt of the Redeemer, but when he eventually comes, woe to mankind if he proves to be the wrong one. Himmler's masseur discusses his master's theories of an impending ice age, and Hitler's valet appears, surrounded by magicians and Nazi insignia.

As a life-size Punch and Judy show, two men in 1920s clothes argue about the future, and the need for a strong man who after the humiliation of Versailles will lead Germans into the new millennium. Against a backdrop of Villa Wahnfried in Bayreuth, Hitler rises from Richard Wagner's grave, recalling all the good and evil genies that brought him to power, his very existence the logical outcome of Western civilisation and its dreams of self-fulfilment. Hanussen, the astrologer and magician, predicts turmoil and the appearance of a race of world conquerors. A disciple muses how, with the eventual death of the Hero, ordinary men and women will forget their love of the Fatherland, and exchange their failed dream for material goods. Hitler's valet remembers the day-to-day crises of socks and underpants, his master's sudden outbursts, his tears, loneliness and sentimentality.

Part 3: *Das Ende eines Wintermarchens/The End of the Winter's Tale*: The girl in black hears voices, among them Goebbels', praising the faith that can move mountains. Heinrich Himmler confides in his masseur how he has been chosen by Providence to commit great crimes in order to save the German people from racial degeneracy and moral decadence. As his henchmen complain about how hard it is to kill so many people every day, Himmler recalls other purges and cruelties committed by men in the name of history, and reminds them that their motives must be pure. At an official dinner, Himmler begins to rave about vegetarianism, tea-totalism and sexual abstinence; he talks to the astrologer, who predicts Hitler's death for April 1945. Himmler is apprehensive and has his own fortune read to him.

A series of back-projected photographs of Hitler's Obersalzberg residence recapitulates its history up to its destruction by Allied bombers. An ex-Nazi visits the ruins, and fantasises about his time with Hitler, while German radio transmits a live broadcast of Wehrmacht units from all over the front singing "Silent Night". The ventriloquist holds the Hitler dummy, who complains that he has been misused by the entertainment business. Having failed as an artist, Hitler, to his

regret, had to turn to politics to realise his vision. Even in defeat, he had profoundly altered the world – the map of Europe has changed, the Jews have their own state, America is a global power. The Third Reich was merely a foretaste of what the twentieth century still had in store – for Africa, Far East Asia, South America, but also for the 'United States of Europe', and Germany itself. The world may have defeated him, but at what cost to its ecological and ethical survival?

Part 4: *Wir Kinder der Hölle/We, the Children of Hell*: The Master of Ceremonies returns to continue the dummy's lugubrious musings about Hitler's place in Europe's and Germany's history, from the Holy Roman Emperors to the Hapsburgs' dream of a Central-European Germany, and Bismarck's realisation of a Germany unified under the Prussian rule of order, discipline and sacrifice. *Mein Kampf* had spelt it all out, and if Hitler thought of himself as a Siegfried, the scourge of Western laissez-faire liberalism, slaying the dragon of democracy, then democracy had made a scapegoat of him because it had recognised him as its alter ego, its own 'will to power'. The ventriloquist takes up the theme, pointing out who had given Hitler his ideas: Imperial Rome, the British Empire, while the Jews contributed the idea of racial purity and the dream of Jerusalem Regained.

Berchtesgaden opens its Hitler memorial museum, and incorporates it into the Mad Ludwig fairy-tale castle tour. Hitler's Berlin victory parade, planned by Speer for 1950, is now celebrated every night in Disneyland. The girl in black strolls across the stage, littered with gallows, scale models of Speer's buildings, the charred corpse of Goebbels, and a seemingly endless procession of Nazis, their victims and fellow travellers. The ventriloquist argues with the Hitler dummy, claiming that he had turned whatever was idealist and noble about Germany into kitsch and commercialism. Can there be redemption for Western civilisation which had used Hitler as much as it had been used by him? The young girl dreams among the dolls and puppets of German history. A black hole seems to swallow both past and future, rending the world apart, to reveal an eye that is a tear, in the midst of which can be seen the girl. As the galaxies rush towards us, the image of the Holy Grail appears, promising an apotheosis we are already too old to be part of.

As its programmatic title makes clear, *Hitler, a Film from Germany*, Hans Jürgen Syberberg's 1977 epic, puts forth a thesis about history and film, and pursues it by way of the cinema's mechanisms of identification and projection. Right from the opening, the paraphernalia of telescope, crystal ball, back projection and Edison's Black Maria grandiosely conjure a whole series of suggestive parallels played out on what remains, throughout the seven hours, an almost empty stage, on which only puppet voices ►

◀ and dummies, blow-ups and cardboard cut-outs, are allowed to appear. The conjunction Hitler/cinema is more central to Syberberg's project than commentators some fifteen years ago were willing to consider.

It does not exhaust itself in the anecdotes about Hitler's friendship with Leni Riefenstahl, his addiction to (banned) Hollywood movies, or even the extended analogy of the Second World War conducted in the cutting rooms of newsreel studios for the private viewing of the Führer. Located at the intersection of other people's (of a people's) projections, fantasies and traumas, Adolf Hitler is a cypher, a space that is supposed to designate an 'us' - (German) spectators in and of the cinema, in and of history. In this respect, Syberberg owes a debt to Susan Sontag's essay "Fascinating Fascism", which first probed the dynamics of captivity. But it is also close to Jean Baudrillard, who argues that we have made a fetish out of fascism because it is the West's last moment of History with a capital 'H'.

Syberberg's basic metaphor is that of a journey: not through history, but through the 'cultural hell' of contemporary Germany, with visual references to Dante's Inferno and the Master of Ceremonies a parody of Virgil. There are other structuring myths: that of the quest (the Grail legend), the Exodus, the Dies Irae. The superimposition and interweaving of such archetypes of Western civilisation creates a texture of citation, which the film then turns into its own textual movement: from prophecy to exorcism, from hope to betrayal, from expectation to false realisation, from myth to Realpolitik.

A radical anti-realist, Syberberg relies on figurative, allegorical, symbolic, literal meaning, echoing off each other to provide an interpretation of history in the biblical sense of exegesis. History becomes a hermeneutics of the texts which make up its moments, before they yield a coherent explanation and are pressed into the linear flow of narrative. It is only when history has been returned to the state of fragments, to a useless collection of fetish objects, 'plunder' and worthless junk, that its reconstruction and re-presentation can be attempted, in the spirit of redemption, by rescuing it from over-exposure as much as oblivion.

Not only does the film want to 'deconstruct' our view of history, it also attacks cinematic representation itself. *Hitler* starts deceptively like a Hollywood sci-fi adventure, as it draws us in with bold special effects that simulate a three-dimensional screen, with objects rushing towards the spectator from the depths of space. Gradually, through superimposition and dissolves, Syberberg substitutes a space that can be recognised as 'back stage', abandoned, full of dummies, debris and props. The spectacular mode is conjured up only to be banished for the rest of the film, as if to indicate the end of a (film-)historical development.

In its place, a metaphoric chain - star, tear, glass ball - enacts the transformation of 'world' and material reality into vision and eye, a transformation which mainstream cinema accomplishes so unquestioningly, but which for Syberberg becomes a moral and philosophical issue in itself.

Hitler is part of a trilogy, also comprising *Ludwig, Requiem for a Virgin King* (1972) and *Karl May* (1975), as well as Syberberg's copious writings on the subject of contemporary Germany, German history and the German mentality. The startling parallels drawn between Hitler and Hollywood, Nazi judges and West German film critics, Goebbels and *Playboy* centrefolds, appear slightly less gratuitous when the submerged terms of Syberberg's involved and intricate argument regarding how we got into the twentieth century are unravelled. Whether this makes the links more convincing remains a moot point. However, because Syberberg raises questions about the utopias both promised and betrayed by popular culture and populist politics, his thesis deserves to be heard.

The case - especially at the time - was made more often about Socialist utopias betrayed by Stalinism, so his attempt to point to the demagogic and deeply authoritarian sides of (consumer-)democracy may well strike a chord, even if Syberberg's anti-Americanism smacks of Eurocentric snobbery, his diatribe against show business and sensationalism sounds an all too familiar note in the mass-culture debate, and his enlistment of history all the way back to the Roman Empire might easily be misunderstood as an apologist's ploy. Insofar as *Hitler* is a film about culture more than about politics and history, Richard Wagner's operas are Syberberg's crucial reference point, in that they are both a distillation of Romanticism and its technologically perfected - but therefore also parodied - popularisation.

In line with German philosophers from the 1920s, Syberberg sees the Wagnerian ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and the Nietzschean idea of the State-as-a-work-of-art, partaking in the same change of which the cinema is the modernised, high-tech executor: an aesthetics of sensation, spine-chilling feeling and nerve-tingling thrills having ousted an aesthetics of distance, separation, memory. Thus, the alliance Wagner-Nazism is for Syberberg just a more ideologically transparent version of the alliance between fascism, spectacle and the movies, which in turn prefigures the alliance between consumer capitalism, advertising and television. The biggest puzzle in the end is not Hitler (as the film proclaims), but why Syberberg chose to make his case against the cinema in and for the cinema. Yet since he so obviously set out to reinvent the art (of) film, and in the meantime has all but ceased to work as a film director, one can be fairly sure it is a puzzle that has not escaped his notice.

Thomas Elsaesser

Housesitter

USA 1992

Director: Frank Oz

Certificate

PG

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Imagine Films

Entertainment

For Universal

Executive Producer

Bernie Williams

Producer

Brian Grazer

Associate Producers

Karen Kehela

Michelle Wright

Production Co-ordinator

Jennifer Barrett

Unit Production Manager

Bernie Williams

Location Manager

Michael Williams

Casting

John Lyons

New York Associate:

Christine Sheaks

LA Associate:

Carol Larkin

Boston:

Collinge/Pickman

Assistant Directors

James W. Skotchdopole

Donald J. Lee Jnr

Maggie Murphy

Screenplay

Mark Stein

Story

Mark Stein

Brian Grazer

Director of Photography

John A. Alonzo

Colour

DeLuxe

Camera Operator

Peter Norman

Video Playback

R. A. LeFande

Optical Effects

The Effects House

Editor

John Jymson

Production Designer

Ida Random

Art Directors

Jack Blackman

Jeff Sage

Set Design

Philip Messina

Art Department

Co-ordinators

Kristen Toscano

Messina

Jill Blackman

Brad Jacques

Set Decorator

Tracey A. Doyle

Set Dressers

Tokuda Moody

Sean Patrick Brennan

Norman Berens

Maria A. Nay

Robert H. Schleinig

Draughtsman

Davis Keniston

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Al Disarro

Music

Miles Goodman

Music Performed by

Piano:

Michael Lang

Bass:

Brian Bromberg

Drums:

Steve Schaeffer

Orchestration

Oscar Castro-Neves

Music Editor

Nancy Fogarty

Costume Design

Betsy Cox

Costume Supervisor

Rosalie Samplin

Costumers

Steve Martin:

Dennis

Schoonderwoerd

Key:

Debbie Holbrook

Cassy McEvoy

Make-up Artists

Steve Martin:

Frank H. Griffin Jnr

Goldie Hawn:

Tom Case

Additional:

Marilyn Carbone

Janet Garr

Title Design

Wayne Fitzgerald

Supervising Sound Editor

Maurice Schell

Sound Editors

Dialogue:

Richard P. Cirincione

Laura Civiello

Neil L. Kaufman

ADR Editor

Jane McCulley

Foley Editors

Bruce Kitzmeyer

Ahmad Shirazi

Video Recordists

Martin Raymond

Bolger

Foley:

George A. Lara

Music:

Joel W. Moss

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Lee Dichter

Kerry Kelley

Harry Higgins

Foley Artist

Elisha Birnbaum

Production Assistants

Set:

Timothy Lee

Tina Stauffer

Lisa M. Rowe

Kevin O'Brien

Brian MacDonald

Kelly Wearstler

Seth Blackman

Mark Linnehan

Office:

Sharon Owyang

Mary Beth Holland

Gerald Frasco

Rebecca Riemer

Stand-ins

Steve Martin:

Devron Conrad

Goldie Hawn:

Christine Romeo

Dog Trainer

David Bruce Allsberry

Cast

Steve Martin

Newton Davis

Goldie Hawn

Gwen

Dana Delany

Becky

Julie Harris

Edna Davis

Donald Moffat

George Davis

Peter MacNicol

Marty

Richard B. Shull

Ralph

Laurel Cronin

Mary

Roy Cooper

Moseby

Christopher Durang

Reverend Lipton

Heywood Hale Broun

Travis

Cherry Jones

Patty

Vasek Simek

Karol

Suzanne Whang

Moseby's Secretary

Mary Klug

Lorraine

Alice Duffy

Hazel

Ken Cheeseman

Harv

Tony V.

Ricardo Pitts-Wiley

Bus Drivers

Belle McDonald

Aunt Betty

Bill McDonald

Uncle Ray

Kevin O'Brien

Caterer Truck Driver

Maggie Steig

Molly D. Gerard

David Hannegan

Edward Mason

Grenville Cuyler

Party Guests

Rose-Ann San Martino

Shopkeeper

Hazel Gardner

Mother with Stroller

Phyllis Jubett Gould

Dobbs Mill Pedestrian

George Michael Jones

Molra J. McCarthy

Restaurant Guests

Michael Nurse

Dedication Ceremony

Speaker

Howe F. Perrigo

Bus Person

Patricia Madden

China Shop

Proprietress

9,225 feet

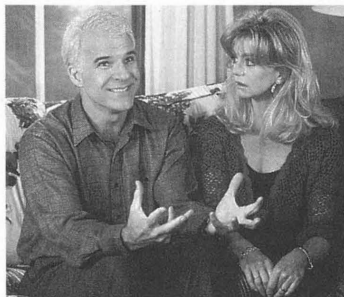
102 minutes

● Boston architect Newton Davis' hopes of married bliss collapse when his childhood sweetheart Becky rejects his proposal, along with the dream house he has built for her in their cosy home town of Dobbs Mill. Three months later, during an office party, Davis meets Gwen, a roving spirit currently waitressing at a Hungarian restaurant; he spills out his sorrows, and they make love. After Davis slips out during the night, Gwen decides to occupy his dream house. In Dobbs Mill, she passes herself off as Davis' new wife, tells fanciful stories of their whirlwind romance, and soon wins the friendship of Davis' parents and Becky herself.

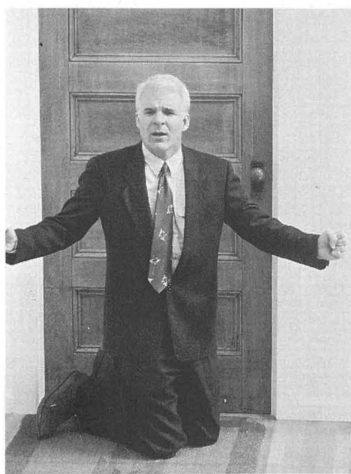
Determined to sell the Dobbs Mill house, a perplexed Davis arrives to find Gwen in residence. She tells him she lost her job and had nowhere else to go, though this later proves to be another tall tale. Detecting signs of jealousy from Becky, Davis makes a deal with Gwen: her charade of marriage will be maintained, but their relationship will supposedly break up because of Gwen's infidelity with an invented old boyfriend, Boomer. However, given Becky's new tenderness towards Davis (which he does everything to encourage), Boomer is soon not required.

Davis' parents suggest a celebration party with family and friends to help the battling newlyweds make a fresh start. Davis resists, but Gwen, a foster child long bereft of family, happily agrees. Having spread the lie that Davis' boss, Moseby, has given him a promotion, she now worms her way into Moseby's affections; he, too, joins the party guest list. With no traceable parents of her own, Gwen summons two derelicts to serve as stand-ins. While Gwen cries in her bedroom, upset that her new family is only a fake, Davis shows Moseby around the house and clinches his promotion.

In front of Becky, Gwen then plays the furious spurned wife. Davis



Acquired: Steve Martin, Goldie Hawn



Gifted: Steve Martin

applauds her performance, but Gwen reveals that she was not acting, and that she believes their 'marriage' worth saving. The way is now clear for Davis to resume his relationship with Becky, but he pulls back at the last moment and runs after Gwen, who is about to leave town. He declares his love, and their false marriage finally becomes real.

When Steve Martin trips headlong over a sofa, makes goofy love in a fireplace, and tries to avoid singing an Irish lullaby, *Housesitter* proves irresistible. But these are isolated moments: elsewhere, Frank Oz's "romantic comedy about loving, lying and living together" (to quote the publicity) is too dawdling, and screenwriter Mark Stein's characters rarely slip into sharp focus. Goldie Hawn's Gwen, the waitress who spins tall stories with each breath, is variously presented as a breezy free spirit, an orphan waif desperate to join a family and town out of Norman Rockwell, and a conniving manipulator of others' emotions. Hawn meanwhile capers about as though she were still the kooky *Laugh-In* girl of twenty-five years ago. Donald Moffat, as the hero's father, puts the matter most diplomatically: "She is something of an acquired taste".

Martin himself begins in fine fettle, though as the story unfolds, his special gifts for physical fooling get squeezed out. His character also undergoes an unfortunate change: his Boston architect provokes easy laughter when acting frustrated, incredulous, even condescending; less so when Davis joins Gwen's charade of a marriage for his own personal benefit and deceives the good souls of Dobbs Mill. A tighter script and sharper direction might have softened the blow. But Frank Oz's dilatory manner means every flaw lies clearly exposed alongside the scattered bright spots. Even the setting is handled slackly. Given an architect hero and a dream house as the plot's fulcrum, any production designer worth his or her salt would have conjured a house full of intriguing design. But apart from its wraparound porch, Ida Random's dull creation positively encourages directorial neglect.

Geoff Brown

Immaculate Conception

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Jamil Dehlavi

Certificate

(Not yet issued)

Distributor

Feature Film Company

Production Company

Dehlavi Films

In association with

Film on Four

Producer

Jamil Dehlavi

Production Co-ordinators

Shireen Niazi

Mohammed Ahsan

Stewart Richards

Production Managers

Michael Treen

Trevor Ingman

Jonny Kurzman

Location Manager

Shahid Ali

Casting

NY:

Deborah Brown

Karachi:

Shamshad Ali Khan

Bombay:

Dolly Thakkar

London:

Shankari Waran

Puneet Sira

Assistant Directors

Henry Tomlinson

Kate Dann

Screenplay

Jamil Dehlavi

Director of Photography

Nic Knowland

Colour

Metrocolor

Camera Operator

Nic Knowland

Editor

Chris Barnes

Production Designer

Mike Porter

Art Director

Mohsin Mirza

Set Dresser

Gwenda Ffoord

Special Effects

Jim Francis

Music

Richard Harvey

Music Extracts

"Sonata in D Minor"

by Domenico Scarlatti,

performed by

Carlos Bonell

Songs

"Gulab Shah Qawwali"

by Javed Allah Ditta,

performed by

Abida Parveen; "Shahana"

performed by

Ustad Fateh Ali Khan

Choreography

Yaqoob

Costume Design

Jane Moxon

Make-up Artist

Marella Shearer

Titles

Les Latimer

Film & Video

Sound Editor

John Poyner

Sound Recordists

Derek Williams

Godfrey Kirby

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Paul Carr

Robert Farr

Production Assistants

Nisar Ahmed Khan

Angus Stewart

Cast

James Wilby

Alistair

Melissa Leo

Hannah

Shabana Azmi

Samira

Zia Mohyeddin

Shehzada

James Cossins

Godfrey

Shreeram Lagoo

Dadaji

Ronny Jhutti

Kamal

Tim Choate

David Schwartz

Bhaskar

Raju

Bill Bailey

American Consul

Zafar Hameed

Saeed Ahmed

Zahoor Ahmad

Yaqoob Zakaria

Nasir Anwar Khan

Mosque Guardians

Sultan Khan

Police Inspector

Intezar Hussain

Customs Officer

Vaagar Hur

Sweet Seller

Rashid Akhtar

Craftshop Vendor

Farzana Rashid

Alistair's Secretary

Rashid Karapiet

Doctor

Nasreen Shagufta

Ayah

Khalid Shaikh

Bearer

Amanullah Khan

Samira's Gunman

Badi Uzzaman

Dadaji's Retainer

Abu Rabi

Hawas Khan

Bilu Star

Harjit Singh

Dadaji's Gunmen

Mohammed Aslam

Dadaji's Servant

Jamshed Ansari

Consul's Driver

10,800 feet

120 minutes

The Jewish-American Hannah and the English Alistair, a childless couple, live in Karachi, where he works for a wildlife conservation agency. While visiting a fertility shrine with her aristocratic friend Samira (whose parents have been killed in internecine wars and who has been brought up by her grandfather), Hannah is startled when the chief eunuch priest, Shehzada, perceives her desire to have a child, and promises she will conceive if she returns to the shrine with her husband. Alistair reluctantly

agrees. Hannah meanwhile becomes increasingly suspicious of Alistair's relationship with Samira; unknown to her, Samira has taken Alistair to visit the eunuchs and paid them to expose themselves so she can take photographs for an assignment for *National Geographic*.

Samira also accompanies the fey English dilettante Godfrey, a dubious dealer and collector, to view an ancient copy of the Koran, which she illicitly photographs. When the Holy Book disappears, Godfrey becomes the prime suspect, pursued by both police and the guardians of the mosque. As Pakistan is wracked by political disturbances, his collection is vandalised. In the course of Hannah and Alistair's requisite three-day stay at the shrine, they undergo a kind of conversion to Islam and partake of a drugged drink under whose influence they make passionate love. Afterwards, Kamal, the boy assigned to tend to their needs, makes love to the still partially drugged Hannah. Before leaving, Hannah agrees to return for their baby's circumcision.

Joy at the discovery of her pregnancy is overshadowed by anxious dreams and worsening relations with Alistair, who makes love to Samira. When Samira learns of Hannah's pregnancy, she sends Alistair a gift: a live cobra and a signed copy of a photograph she has taken of him naked. On returning home after the birth, the couple are shocked to find the eunuchs demanding to see the baby. Alistair drives them away and they leave cursing the child. Hannah discovers the incriminating photograph of Alistair, and flees to the shrine where she determines to have her son circumcised. Samira warns Alistair that the eunuchs in fact castrate babies, and they arrive just in time with the police, who shoot Shehzada. He is imprisoned, the shrine is closed, and Hannah's parents - her father is a US senator - despatch her attorney brother, David

Schwartz, to persuade her to return home with the baby.

Meanwhile, Kamal visits Hannah and begs her to use her influence to free Shehzada. When Hannah takes her son, called Joseph, to the local synagogue to be blessed, Kamal follows and tells her the truth about the child. Later at the house, Kamal demands payment: a green card which will enable him to get employment in the US. This is overheard by David who phones the police; Kamal is brutally apprehended and imprisoned. Meanwhile, Samira's grandfather dies, warning her against the Englishman. But it is to her house that Alistair goes, after guessing his child's true parentage. Godfrey takes Hannah and the baby to Samira's but Alistair refuses to leave with her. On the way back, Godfrey is summarily executed for the theft of the Koran. When Hannah finally leaves with David, they are stopped by Shehzada, now freed, who begs them to help secure Kamal's release.

Immaculate Conception suggests an interesting return to the 'other world' exotica of Conan Doyle or Rider Haggard's adventure stories, in which foreign parts become a testing ground for the self and, in particular, for Western rationalism. Jamil Dehlavi, who was born in Calcutta and studied in Britain before returning to film extensively in the East, seems well placed to explore this theme: this is his third feature (and second with *Film on Four* backing); a previous film, *The Blood of Hussain*, made in Pakistan in 1980, resulted in his being unable to return to that country for ten years.

Although *Immaculate Conception* grew out of a documentary about religion in Pakistan, little trace of the naturalistic or 'current affairs' approach remains. Instead, Dehlavi fascinatingly picks up where Hammer left off. The Gulab Shah shrine is just as much a fictional confection as one might find in that company's Oriental offer- ▶



Post-colonial, post-Hammer: James Wilby

◀ ings (*The Strangers of Bombay?*), with its bare-breasted ritual bathing and drug-induced frenzies. And the eruption of the eunuchs on to the neat lawns of the expatriate couple's modern bungalow after the birth of their baby is as shocking as the monster crashing through the French windows in one of Terence Fisher's Frankenstein films.

While the film is as hysterical as that recent exercise in anti-Islamic paranoia, *Not Without My Daughter*, its project is quite different. Dehlavi's couple may have impeccable credentials – she has apparently compiled a collection of Pakistani folk tales, and he works for a wildlife conservation agency – they are not for a moment allowed off the moral hook. The West seems to embody order and rationality (Alistair carefully weighs the young turtles he will release into the wild) and the East chaos (a government official permits the hunting of endangered species for a fistful of rupees, the aristocratic Samira colludes in the theft of a national treasure). But the corruption of the East is, the film argues, a product of grossly unequal exchange.

The love-hate relationship with the US is voiced most coherently by Kamal, the young boy who services both the Westerners' and his own people's desire for fecundity and potency. He despises the role of 'poor people' which Pakistanis must play vis-à-vis the West, and at the same time reverences the idea of a free and just America where all are equal (an image of her country to which Hannah reacts in disbelief). The film's opening shot is something of a coup: an 'illegible' close-up of Zia Mohyeddin's Shehzada, all wig, rouge and powder, an image whose meaning is only revealed at the film's conclusion when the features of the ageing eunuch seem to bear the symbolic weight of his country's emasculated plight (the post-colonial British are equally depicted, through Godfrey and the sterile Alistair, as in a sense emasculated).

The film is also spikily intelligent in its use of that archetypal symptom of patriarchal anxiety, doubt about biological paternity, which reaches back through film (*The Exorcist*) and literature (Kleist, Goethe) to Christianity itself. That said, the film is flawed by its failure to gain much momentum until after the birth of the child, its pace slowed further by unnecessary reaction shots and the inclusion of some pointless sequences (Alistair's inept attempt to seduce Samira, for example). Indeed the character of Samira herself seems compounded of loose ends and contradictions. Hannah's own attitude towards the baby during her pregnancy is never clear, and we have no evidence of her longing for motherhood. Then there is Dehlavi's tendency to insert several too many significant details. Does the bedside book Alistair reaches for after coitus with Samira have to be *The Satanic Verses*?

Verina Glaessner

Jersey Girl

USA 1992

Director: David Burton Morris

Certificate

15

Distributor

Entertainment

Production Companies

Electric Pictures/

Interscope

Communications

Executive Producers

Ted Field

Robert W. Cort

Electric Pictures:

Eyal Rimon

Gregory G. Woertz

David K. Brownstein

Line Producer

Amanda DiGiulio

Production Co-ordinator

Elizabeth J. Nevin

Unit Production Manager

Amanda DiGiulio

Location Manager

Jane Barrer

Post-production

Supervisor

Andrew M. Stewart

Post-production

Co-ordinator

Tim Bridwell

Casting

Jane Jenkins

Janet Hirschenson

Roger Mussenden

Extras:

Irene Kearney

Extras Children:

Patricia Womelsdorf

Assistant Directors

Gary Sales

Marlene Arvan

Screenplay

Gina Wendkos

Director of Photography

Janet Fortunato

Colour

Technicolor;

prints by DeLuxe

Camera Operator

Edward Gold

Editor

Norman Hollyn

Production Designer

Lester Cohen

Set Decorator

Alyssa Winter

Set Dressers

Joel Barkow

Elizabeth DeLuna

Dennis Causey

Robin Koenig

Special Effects

Steve Kirshoff

Richard Dowgin

Denis Zack

Music

Misha Segal

Music Supervisor

Steve Bedell

Music Editors

Michael Weatherwax

Carl Swartz

Songs

"Jersey Groove" by

Steven Wills, Max

Wills, Maryum Ali,

performed by May May;

"Between Two Fires" by

Pamela Mattioli, Paula

Mattioli, Mike Ging,

Brian Lemar,

performed by The

Twins; "Ooh La La" by

David Hallyday, Lisa C.

Cohen, performed by

David Hallyday; "Hang

on (Til Tomorrow)",

"Love and Money" by

Treana Morris, Gareth

Young, performed by

Tag; "Ku Ku Ka Chu

(Baby I Want You)",

"For a Heart that's

True", "Nobody But

Me" by John Cafferty,

performed by John

Cafferty and the

Beaver Brown Band;

"Taste of Love" by Carl

Dixon, Brett Walker,

performed by Jim

Jamison; "Girl with

a Problem" by Jay

Semko, "Dream Away"

by Bryan Potvin,

performed by The

Northern Pikes; "Jersey

Girl" by Tom Waits,

performed by Jack

Mack and the Heart

Attack; "Born to Give

My Love" by Mary Ann

Kennedy, Pam Rose,

Pat Bunch, performed

by Kennedy Rose; "It

Almost Slipped Away"

by Douglas Snider,

performed by Douglas

Maynard; "Your Love"

by and performed by

Ben Weisman

Costume Design

Claudia Brown

Wardrobe Supervisor

Denise Andres

Make-up Artist

Gigi Williams

Title Design

Jennifer McHARRY/

Concept Arts, Inc

Titles

Howard A. Anderson

Company

Supervising Sound Editor

Patrick M. Griffith

Sound Editors

Richard G. Gorwin

Mark Petersen

Dave Stone

ADR Editors

Richard G. Gorwin

Mark Petersen

Dave Stone

Sound Recordists

Mark Weingarten

Don Hahn

Ultra stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Jeff Haboush

Gerry Lentz

Walter A. Gest

Greg G. Gest

Digital Sound Effects

Editors

Scott Wolf

Ann Scibelli

Production Assistants

Gavin Harris

Rob Hallenbake

John Fischer

Paul Malmont

Office:

Leo Santos

Stunt Co-ordinator

Peter Buccosi

Stunts

William Anagnus

Norman Douglass

Roy Farfel

Janet Papparazzo

Cast

Jami Gertz

Toby

Dylan McDermott

Sal

Molly Price

Cookie

Aida Turturro

Angie

Star Jasper

Dot

Sheryl Lee

Tara

Joseph Bologna

Bennie

Joseph Mazzello

Jason

Phillip Casnoff

Mitchell

Pat Collins

Gabe

Regina Taylor

Rosie

Amy Johanna Sakasitz

Monica

Mary Beth Peil

Day Care Centre

Teacher

Jordan Dean

Tim

Richard Maldone

Bobby

David Dundara

Mercedes Salesman

Simon Jutras

French Restaurant

Waiter

Page Johnson

Maitre d'

Lori Anne Mahl

Cookie's Salon Patron

Marc McQue

Kenneth

Buckley Norris

Security Guard

8,576 feet

95 minutes

Clifton, New Jersey. In their regular diner, kindergarten teacher Toby complains to her trio of friends, Cookie, Dot and Angie, that she's tired of dating local men and has set her heart on meeting Mr Right from Manhattan to provide the romance and career possibilities she lacks. An opportunity soon arises when she crashes her ageing VW Beetle into a brand new Mercedes just as the owner, handsome New York graphics salesman Sal, is driving out of the showroom. With a little persistence, she gets his address and phone number.

Although her plumber father, Bennie, warns her to be wary, and Sal has his secretary block all her calls, Toby tracks him down and joins him uninvited in the middle of a business lunch, impressing everyone with her sheer chutzpah. Later, at a gallery opening, Sal's well-to-do girlfriend Tara reminds him of the difference in their respective backgrounds, and on returning home he calls Toby to arrange dinner.

Despite Toby's initial anxieties, the evening is surprisingly successful, and in the park the following afternoon, Sal confides to her that he has worked his way up from similarly modest beginnings in Queens. At a glitzy mayoral benefit, however, Sal's obvious unease at being with Toby in front of both Tara and his boss Mitchell causes Toby to storm out in embarrassment. But Sal runs out to console her and they spend the night together at his apartment.

Convinced by Tara that this new liaison is a step backwards, Sal visits Toby to break things off. But their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of Toby's girlfriends who feel neglected by their old pal. In the diner a few days later, Toby announces that her new romance is over and the ever-loyal Cookie, Dot and Angie resolve to hit back at Sal and humiliate him in front of a client. All four women are subse-

quently reunited in the diner, their friendship stronger than ever.

Mitchell warns Sal not to risk his career for an easy conquest, but Sal defends Toby and walks out on both his job and his relationship with Tara. Driving to Clifton, he turns up at Toby's school to ask her forgiveness, but she feels unable to trust him again. About to drive away, he smashes up his Mercedes in front of her, prompting Toby to rush lovingly into his arms.

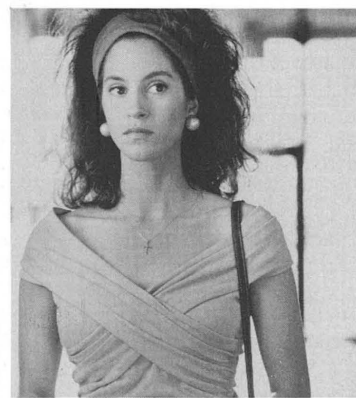
The 1980 Tom Waits song, from which this amiable comic romance presumably takes its title, makes great play with the journey across the bridge from New Jersey to New York leading to passionate consummation. David Burton Morris' film follows the same trajectory, but turns out to be much more successful in marking the divide separating its central couple than it is in bridging the gap between them.

Whether it's a matter of home location (she lives in Clifton, he in Manhattan), cars (her Beetle, his Mercedes), clothes (her huge earrings, his designer suits), or even vocabulary (she doesn't know what venison is, he has to explain to her what graphics means), Gina Wendkos' screenplay builds up a comprehensive inventory of class difference. This portrayal of a divided society – underlined by Bennie's homespun philosophy, "An apple knows it's an apple, a banana knows it's a banana" – provides the framework for a wish-fulfilment narrative in the *Pretty Woman* mould.

Though the initial revelation that Dylan McDermott's Sal is himself from an ordinary Queens background threatens to disrupt such imaginings, *Jersey Girl* goes on to reinforce the same Capraesque platitudes about the unhappy rich and the salt o' the earth poor. But *Jersey Girl* reverses the polarities, with the kindergarten teacher having the advantage over the high-powered sales executive. In his rise and rise, Sal may have achieved financial security but apparently at the cost of family and friends, precisely the commodities which Toby has in abundance. He has severed ties with his parents whereas she still has the support of her loving father; she learns the value of friendship while he discovers only the treachery born of his superficial relationships with Mitchell and Tara. In further contrast to *Pretty Woman*, the end of *Jersey Girl* has Sal sacrificing his Mercedes to his new-found, down-home girl rather than bringing it to her rescue, thus pulling the film back from a simple endorsement of the rags-to-riches fantasy.

Displaying an affection and wit reminiscent of Barry Levinson's *Diner*, Burton Morris makes the most of the scenes between the four girls. But on the whole, the diagrammatic characterisation and generally inoffensive tone allow him little opportunity to bring to *Jersey Girl* the rough-edged provocativeness that made his previous *Patti Rocks* so invigorating.

Trevor Johnston



Meet Jane Doe: Jami Gertz

Just Like a Woman

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Christopher Monger

Certificate
15

Distributor
Rank

Production Company
Zenith Productions
In association with
LWT/British Screen

Executive Producers
Archie Tait
Fred Turner
Nick Elliott

Producer
Nick Evans

Production Executive
Chris Catterall

Production Supervisor
Ted Morley

Production Co-ordinator
Lorraine Fennell

Location Manager
Nigel Gostelow

Casting
Joyce Gallie
US Consultant:
Vickie Thomas

ADR:
Brendan Donnison

Assistant Directors
Michael Murray
Kevin Westley
Scott Murray

Screenplay
Nick Evans
Based on the book
Geraldine, For the Love of a Transvestite by
Monica Jay

Director of Photography
Alan Hume

Colour
Eastman Colour

Camera Operators
Roger Pearce

2nd Unit:
Jimmy Davis
Derek Browne

Opticals
Filmoptic

Editor
Nicolas Gaster

Associate Editor
Neil Farrell

Production Designer
John Box

Art Director
Michael White

Set Decorator
Peter Howitt

Music
Michael Storey

Music Director
Ray Singer

Music Performed by
Vocals:
Barbara Courtney-King
Guitar:
Winston Delandro
Sax/Flute:
Bud Beadle
Keyboards:
Michael Storey

Percussion:
Ray Singer

Music Production Supervisor
Graham Walker

Music Co-ordinator
Jane Bridgeman

Songs
"Que Sera Sera"
by Livingston, Evans,
performed by Doris
Day; "Love Letters"
by Young, Heyman,
"(You're the) Devil
in Disguise" by Giant,
Baum, Kaye, "Return
to Sender" by
Blackwell, Scott,
performed by Elvis
Presley; "La Senorita"
by Anastasi, performed
by The Latin Touch;
"Big Girls Don't Cry"
by Crewe, Gaudio,
performed by The
Singer Machine;
"Sisters Are Doin' It
for Themselves" by
Annie Lennox, Dave
Stewart, performed
by Eurythmics, Aretha
Franklin; "Politics of
Love" by Blanshard,
Skarbek, performed
by Colin Blunstone

Choreography
David Massingham

Costume Designer
Suzy Peters

Wardrobe
Supervisor:
William McPhail
Missess:
Sarah Arthur

Chief Make-up Artists
Fae Hammon
Sarah Monzani

Make-up Artist
Madeleine Masters

Titles
Peter Watson

Associates
Sound Editors
John Poyner
Dialogue:
Bill Trent

Sound Recordists
Neil Kingsbury

Music:
Richard Whaley

ADR Recordist
Peter Lacey

Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Otto Snel
Nic Le Messurier
Kevin Taylor

Consultants
Monica Jay
Kabuki Theatre:
Lorna Marshall



So normal: Adrian Pasdar, Julie Walters

Researcher
Tim Unsworth

Cast
Julie Walters
Monica
Adrian Pasdar
Gerald
Paul Freeman
Miles Millichamp
Susan Wooldridge
Gordon Kennedy
C.J.
Ian Redford
Tom Braxton
Shelley Thompson
Eleanor Tilson
Togo Igawa
Akira Watanabe
Jill Spurrier
Daphne
Corey Cowper
Erika Tilson
Mark Hadfield
Dennis
Joseph Bennett
Jocelyn
Brooke
Linda
Eve Bland
Betty
Jeff Nuttall
Vanessa
Sally Inaba
Interpreter
David Hunt
Rupert Holliday Evans
Policemen

Albert Welling
Priest
Edwin Hock Thong Low
Waiter
Tim Stern
Hypnotist
Rohan McCullough
Mrs Millichamp
John Shin
Embassy Attaché
David Tse
Harumi Okada
Kabuki Actors
Brigid Major
Gerald's Secretary
Laura Goulesbrough
Lillie
Gareth Heale
Tom Tilson
Chloe Skew
Emily Tilson
Damian Hunt
Young Gerald
Sam Wise
Millichamp's Son

9,506 feet
106 minutes

Gerald is a young, high-flying American merchant banker living in London with his wife and two children. He's about to pull off a multi-million-pound deal with a big Japanese corporation when his wife finds another woman's underwear in their bedroom and throws him out of the house. Meanwhile, London housewife Monica, divorced after twenty-two years of unhappy marriage, is looking for lodgers to fill her large home. When Gerald moves in, she is delighted and surprised when a relationship begins to develop; but after they make love for the first time, he starts to avoid her.

Eventually, he confesses his secret: he is a transvestite, and before her eyes, he transforms himself into "Geraldine". He takes her to the elite Pembroke Club, where she meets his friends and some of their wives. She encourages him to go out in the daytime as Geraldine, and they go shopping together. They enjoy humorous role-playing games, and the relationship proves liberating for both of them. At work, meanwhile, Gerald and his colleague C.J. suspect that their racist, arrogant boss Miles Millichamp is undermining their Japanese deal for reasons of his own.

On his way home from the Pembroke one night, "Geraldine" is pulled over by the police, arrested and humiliated. Miles fires him, and he resolves to go back to the US. But Monica and C.J. hatch a plan that could help Gerald rebuild his life and save the Japanese deal. At the crucial meeting, the Japanese surprise Miles by calling in two independent financial advisers: Monica and Geraldine. They expose Miles' fraudulent plan; Gerald's original deal is saved, and the lovers leave the boardroom in triumph. "Life isn't really like this" worries Gerald. "It is tonight" Monica assures him.

When Monica opens her front door and sees Gerald standing there with a pamphlet entitled "Resurrection" under his arm, she assumes he is with the bible-bashers who are working in the neighbourhood and gives him short shrift ("If it's the end of the world, I've got to pop down to the shops, you see"). In fact, Gerald has just been presented with the booklet himself; he's there as a prospective lodger. The scene is a familiar comic 'meeting cute', and it comes with an equally banal sub-text: appearances can be deceptive. But it is also indicative of two impulses behind this romantic comedy; a duality that is appropriate enough in the circumstances.

In the first place, there is an evangelical aspect to the production, carried over, presumably, from Monica Jay's autobiographical novel. Within the mainstream tradition of transvestite movies (from *Some Like It Hot* via *La Cage aux folles* to *Victor/Victoria* and *Tootsie*), this is by far the most prosaic and the least camp. The script, for instance, is at pains to spell out that transvestites are not necessarily gay, and that, in Japan, "a man dressing as a woman is not seen as posing the same social or moral threat". The opening credits sequence features a boy watching, fascinated, as his mother makes up, with Doris Day singing "Que Sera Sera", while the film closes with an end title to the effect that one in twenty men feel the need to dress in women's clothing. The comparison that immediately comes to mind is far out of the mainstream: Ed Wood's labour of love, *Glen or Glenda?*.

Then there is the middle-aged divorcee, Monica. That initial put-down to the stranger on her front doorstep calls on a peculiarly British, female(?), down-to-earth sense of humour which is Julie Walters' forte. It's a humour with a keen sense of the ridiculous, but no desire to ridicule. When Gerald tells Monica about Geraldine, his other half, she cannot help laughing, but she is soon gently asking his forgiveness, seeking to understand. Accompanying Geraldine to a transvestite club, she compares notes with the other wives and girlfriends, and is soon exclaiming, "It's so normal!", for all the world like Walters' Cynthia Payne in *Personal Services*.

There is inevitably something reductive about espousing the normalcy of perversity, but it's hard to argue with the film-makers' liberal political correctness. And to give director Chris Monger his due, while the sex scenes are 15-certificate coy, he does pull off a remarkably sensual transformation scene, in which Gerald becomes Geraldine in a series of slow, enveloping fades. Incidentally, the merchant-banking sub-plot which supplies a feeble narrative motor is remarkable not only for giving us a yuppie hero of sorts, but for what is surely the first happy ending in British cinema to celebrate a Japanese buy-out of a parochial English firm. The times they are a-changin'.

Tom Charity

The News Boys

USA 1992

Director: Kenny Ortega

Certificate
PG

Distributor
Warner Bros

Production Company
Walt Disney
In association with
Touchwood Pacific
Partners I

Producer
Michael Finnell

Associate Producers
Ira Shuman
Marianne Sweeney

Production Associate
Betty Moos

Production Co-ordinator
Nancy Malone
Claycomb

Unit Production Manager
Ira Shuman

Location Manager
Deborah Laub

Casting
Elisabeth Leustig
Associate:
Gregg Smith

Assistant Directors
Dennis M. White
Jeffrey M. Ellis
Heidi Gutman
Robert Scott
Michelle Solotar

Screenplay
Bob Tzudiker
Noni White

Director of Photography
Andrew Laszlo
Panavision

Colour
Technicolor

Matte Photography
Mark A. Sawicki
David S. Williams Jnr
Susan J. Sitnek

Camera Operators
Jeffrey Laszlo
B:
Keith Peterman

Special Visual Effects
Illusion Arts, Inc:
Syd Dutton
Bill Taylor
Production:
Catherine Sudolcan

Brooklyn Bridge Special Techniques
Lynn Ledgerwood

Opticals
Buena Vista Optical

Matte Artist
Robert Stromberg

Editor
William Reynolds

Production Designer
William Sandell

Art Director
Nancy Patton

Set Design
Brad Ricker
Carl J. Stensel

Art Department
Researcher
Angi Neff

Set Decorator
Robert Gould

Illustrator
Giacomo Ghiazza

Special Effects
Co-ordinator
Jim Hart

Special Effects Foreman
David L. Sandlin

Music
Alan Menken
Underscore:
J.A.C. Redford

Music Director
Danny Troob

Music Performed by
Michael Lang
Steve Schaeffer
Neil Stubenhaus
Michael Fisher
Larry Bunker

Songs Arranged by
Alan Menken
Danny Troob

Vocal Arrangements
Danny Troob

Orchestrations
Songs:
Danny Troob

Score:
Tom Pasatieri

Music Producer
Michael Finnell

Songs Producer
Alan Menken

Vocal Consultant
Seth Riggs

Music Supervisor
Maureen Crowe

Music Editors
John Strauss
On-set:
Patricia Carlin

Music Co-ordinator
Marie Snyder

Songs
"Prologue", "Carrying the Banner", "Santa Fe", "My Lovey-Dovey Baby", "Fightin' Irish: Strike Action", "The World Will Know", "Escape from Snyder", "Seize the Day", "King of New York", "High Times, Hard Times", "Rooftop", "Once and for All" by Alan Menken, Jack Feldman

Choreography
Kenny Ortega
Peggy Holmes

Costume Design
Mury Routh

Costume Supervisors
Men:
Darryl Athons
Women:
Mira Zavidowsky

Costumers
Murray Lantz
Robert C. Stewart
Michael C. Lynn

Key Make-up Artist
Joseph W. McKinney

Make-up Artists
Mike Germain
Paul E. Sanchez

Title Design
R/Greenberg Associates

Supervising Sound Editors
Mark Mangini
George Simpson

Sound Editors
Julia Evershade
Warren Hamilton Jnr
David A. Whittaker
Donald Flick

ADR Editors
Curt Schulkey
David Stone

Foley Editors
Mary Ruth Smith
Christopher Flick
Solange Schwalbe-Boiseau

Group ADR Co-ordinator
Mickie McGowan

Sound Recordists
David Kelson
Music:
Bruce Botnick

ADR Recordist
Doc Kane

Foley Recordists
Mark Harris
Randy Singer
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists
Terry Porter
Mel Metcalfe
David J. Hudson
Denis Blackerby

Sound Effects
David Moreno
Matt Beville
Mark Coffey

Foley Artists
Ellen Heuer
Joan Rowe

Production Assistants
Erin M. Bruno

Dominique Cady
Robert Hampton
John M. Joye
Stunt Co-ordinators
Michael M. Vendrell
Ceci Vendrell
Stunts
Lonnie Burr
Nick Dimitri
Doc Duhamel
M.R. Fletcher
Mark Ginther
Richard Giorla
William Holden Jnr
Andrew Charles Koch
Gene LeBell
Stan Mazin
Cliff McLaughlin
Gary Morgan
D.A. Pawley
William Perry
Bobby Porter
Ezra Sutton
Mic Thompson
Jack West
Wrangler
Gordon A. Spencer

Cast
Christian Bale
Jack Kelly
Bill Pullman
Bryan Denton
Ann-Margret
Medda Larkson
Robert Duvall
Joseph Pulitzer
David Moscow
David Jacobs
Ele Keats
Sarah Jacobs
Kevin Tighe
Snyder
Luke Edwards
Les Jacobs
Max Casella
Racetrack
Marty Belafsky
Crutchy
Arvie Lowe Jnr
Boots
Aaron Lohr
Mush
Trey Parker
Kid Blink
Gabriel Damon
Spot Conlon
Dee Caspary
Snitch
Joseph Conrad
Jake
Dominic Maldonado
Itey
Matthew Fields
Snipeshooter
Mark David
Specs
Ivan Dudynsky
Dutchy
Robert Feeney
Snoody
Michael A. Goorjian
Skittery
Dominic Lucero
Bumlets
David Sidoni
Pie Eater
Kevin Stea
Swiftly
Jeffrey DeMunn
Mayer Jacobs
Deborra-Lee Furness
Esther Jacobs

Marc Lawrence
Kloppman
Kevin Michaels
Ten-Pin
Sylvia Short
Melody Santangelo
Lois Young
Nuns
JoAnn Harris
Patrick's Mother
Gregg Kent-Smith
Toby the Candy
Butcher
David James Alexander
Teddy Roosevelt
Michael Lerner
Weasel
Charles Cioffi
Seitz
Shon Greenblatt
Oscar Delancey
David Sheinkopf
Morris Delancey
Mark Lowenthal
Jonathan
William Boyett
Judge Movealong
Monahan
Ryan MacDonald
Mayor Van Wyck
Frank Girardeau
Chief of Police Devery
Shay Duffin
Captain McSwain
Terry Kohl
Bailiff
Tom Finnegan
Bunsen
I.M. Hobson
Gammon
Frank Novak
Policeman
Ogie Banks III
Daxon Calloway
Scott Caudill
D.J. Dellos
Chris Dupré
Dak Eubanks
Brian Friedman
Todd Jenkins
Terry Lindholm
Alan Luzietti
Kevin McCasland
Dean McKliver
James Earl Miller
David Evans
Craig Racławski
Michael Rohrbacher
Gregg Russell
Joshua Wiener
Jesus Fuentes
Tony Gonzales
Robert Jaquez
Larry Jones
Kevin Kruger
David Larson
Patrick Lars Olsen
Travis Payne
Jim Raposa
Damon Butler
Christopher Bonomo
Bret Dieball
Rob Grayson
Michael Irvin
Eric Pesqueira
Scott Thyssell
Jeff Thyssell
Wes Veldink
Michael Warwick
Jason Yribar
Dancers

10,916 feet
121 minutes

Original US title: Newsies

New York City, 1899. The newsboys rise and prepare for another day on the streets. Collecting his supply of papers for the day, Jack Kelly, known as "Cowboy", meets David Jacobs, a novice; they agree to be partners, and Jack instructs David in the art of being a 'newsie'. However, they are forced to flee from Snyder, the warden of the house of refuge from which Jack has recently escaped; they take shelter in the music hall of Medda Larkson, a singer and friend of Jack's father. That evening, Jack dines with David's family, swiftly taking a fancy to his sister Sarah, and learning that his



Trivialising and outshining

father, bereft of union protection, has been fired recently.

Joseph Pulitzer, tyrannical publisher of the *New York World*, decides to charge the newboys more for his paper as a way of compelling them to sell more copies, thereby winning the circulation war. Immediately, Jack advocates a strike; an *ad hoc* union is formed, the support of fellow newsboys throughout the city is enlisted, and the boys are befriended by Bryan Denton, a reporter from the *New York Sun*, who takes up their cause. Pulitzer's bullyboys attempt to quell the 'newsies' with clubs and chains, but are repelled as the Brooklyn contingent displays its pugnacity.

Snyder sees Jack's picture in the *Sun* and informs Pulitzer that he is a fugitive; the mayor agrees to have Jack arrested. During a strike rally in Medda's music hall, Jack is captured, along with several other members of the group. A judge fines the latter (Bryan arrives in time to pay off the fines), but Snyder, revealing that Jack's father was a convict, ensures that Jack is returned to the refuge. Bryan reports that not even the *Sun* covered the story of the rally, and that he has been assigned to another story.

Jack is taken to see Pulitzer, who offers him freedom and money after the strike if he will work for him during it. Initially Jack accepts, but changes his mind when he sees David and Sarah being attacked by Pulitzer's bullyboys. The three of them succeed in persuading Bryan to expose the child labour on which, as he has discovered, the city thrives. A leaflet is printed, using Pulitzer's press, and distributed by the newsboys themselves. The governor promises Bryan that he will act. The newsboys are victorious: Snyder is arrested; Jack is fêted.

A newsboys' strike, and their tenacious opposition to the power of the press (as represented by magnate Joseph Pulitzer), may seem unlikely material for a musical, but it is the film's broader concerns and narrative strands that allow it to evolve into a thoroughly enjoyable example of the genre. The actual events on which the film proudly proclaims itself to be based serve more as an inspiration than a source, as the plot quickly

becomes a pretext for the indulgences of song and dance. Thus Jack Kelly is more than just the daring kid leading the strike and braving the barons: he is a vulnerable loner, deprived of family, inhabiting a fantasy world in which he strikes out West to find his folks. His counterpart David is educated, cushioned by a loving family, pitched into the rough world of the 'newsie' only when his father becomes unemployed.

In accordance with the requirements of the genre (*The Newsboys* resembles *Oliver!* most closely in execution), the drama is quickly reduced to the good and the bad. Bryan represents the moral side of an otherwise unscrupulous profession; Snyder a society which persecutes its most unfortunate products. Romance, in the form of Sarah and Jack (two cultures coalescing), intervenes as and when the plot requires. The film's ultimate effect is to trivialise the issues that inspired it. This is a problem of form more than anything else, but child labour is an important subject meriting more than the perfunctory, sugary treatment that it gets. Another problem is the concomitant tendency to stereotype: the women, in particular, exist only as adjuncts to their partners (David's mother and sister serve the males their dinner, Sarah brings Jack breakfast as a token of her love), while the depiction of Pulitzer's men recalls the denizens of Fagin's kitchen.

All this, however, is not to deny that the film has charm and style. The script teeters on the brink of sentimentality, but manages to endure itself. The songs, predictably rousing ("Seize the Day", "King of New York"), are catchy enough and the musical sequences are performed with verve and discipline, confirming that it is here that the strengths of Kenny Ortega, co-choreographer making his feature film directorial debut, really lie (his background is almost exclusively in choreography). As actors, the boys generally outshine their adult counterparts, Christian Bale and David Moscow giving lively performances as the central duo. Robert Duvall, on the other hand, offers a rather uncertain, slightly stylised version of Pulitzer, while Ann-Margret, limited to a purely singing role, offers no version at all.

Alan Taylor

Nuit et jour (Night and Day)

France 1991

Director: Chantal Akerman

Certificate
15
Distributor
Artificial Eye
Production Company
Pierre Grise Productions
With the participation of Centre National de la Cinématographie/ Canal Plus/Sofinergie 2/ Paradise Films
/Ministère de la Communauté Française de Belgique/ La RTBF (television Belge)/George Reinhart Productions
Executive Producers
Martine Marignac
Maurice Tinchant
Production Managers
France:
Pierre Wallon
Belgium:
Marilyn Watelot
Location Manager
Paris:
Vincent Lombard
Costing
Amah Descloseaux
Lorraine Groleau
Gerda Diddens
Assistant Director
Alain Bonnet
Screenplay
Chantal Akerman
Director of Photography
Jean-Claude Neckelbrouck
In colour
Camera Operator
Pierre Gordower
Editors
Francine Sandberg
Camille Bordes-Resnais
Art Directors
Michel Vandestien
Dominique Dourret
Music
Marc Herouet
Music Performed by
Cello:
Sonia Wieder-Atherton
Piano:
Olivier Reboul
Hélène Audinat
Louise Chirinian
Diane Gauthier
Julie Mondor
Sandrine Ramsayer
Vincent Segal
Songs
"Bachianos Brasileras no.1" by Heitor Villa-Lobos, "Après un rêve" by Gabriel Fauré, performed by Sonia Wieder-Atherton, Olivier Reboul; "Si d'aventure" by Jean-Louis Aubert; "FR3 Journal TV" by Jean-Pierre Danico, Laurent Bacri; "A2 Journal TV" by François Bernheim
Costume Design
Brigitte Nierhaus
Michèle Blondeel
Wardrobe
Marie Mahe
Make-up
Nicole Mora
Sound Editors
Alix Comte
Pierre Tucat
Sound Recordist
Gérard Lamps
Sound Re-records
Eric Ferret
Marie-Jeanne Wijckmans
Production Assistant
Rosalie Lecan
Subtitles
Marc Atherton
Laser Video Titres Paris
Cast
Guillaume Londez
Julie
Thomas Langmann
Jack
François Negret
Joseph
Nicole Colchat
Pierre Laroche
Jack's Parents
Christian Crahay
Old Man
Luc Fonteyn
Young Man with Cat
Sandrine Laroche
Young Woman with Cat
Yves Comeliau
Young Man
Olinde Bolzan
Thirty-year-old Man
Nicole Duret
Annoying Neighbour
Violette Leonard
Cecilia Kankonda
Neighbours
8,596 feet
100 minutes
Subtitles

Jack and Julie, recently arrived in Paris, live together in a small one-bedroom flat. Their complete romantic and sexual involvement precludes friends and neighbours, and they spend the hot summer days making love, showering and cooking. Jack drives a taxi at night, leaving Julie to walk about the city enjoying the noise, the sights and the bustle. One evening, when Jack is changing shifts, Julie meets Joseph, the young man who drives Jack's taxi by day, and he is instantly attracted to her.

Like Jack and Julie, Joseph has no network of friends in Paris and, responding to Julie's sensuality, he too enters into a passionate relationship with her. They go from one hotel to another during the day, making love, before Julie has to return home to be

with Jack. For a short time, the sheer force of passion allows Julie to love both men equally. But Jack, unaware of her relationship with Joseph, nevertheless begins to feel less secure about her love. Julie is unwilling to choose between the two men but she does not want to lose Jack. He and Julie decide to make their flat open-plan and begin to knock down a dividing wall. When the building work is finished, they invite the neighbours to a house-warming. The sudden appearance of other people, and the necessity of being sociable, reunites them as a couple but also signals the end of both affairs. Julie leaves the flat and both her lovers, walking away, in the morning, with her suitcase.

● *Nuit et jour* confirms the themes and ideas that have concerned Chantal Akerman over almost twenty years of film-making. Yet, in some ways, it can be seen as a capitulation to commercialism, a turning away from sexual politics and feminism in favour of a celebration of love and passion. The film is a playful idyll, almost poetic, the dialogue over-romanticised to the point of cliché, presenting difficulties of credibility, more so as it is attached to a narrative which hinges on the youthfulness of Julie and her two lovers Jack and Joseph. Provincial and naive as they may be, they are all three remarkably removed from any of the cultural tags of youth except for their physical beauty and obsessive sexual vitality.

There is a suggestion that Julie will later extend her horizons in work or in study, but for now she is content to devote all her time and energy to sex and love. Much of the film's imagery is given over to sex scenes – lyrical, convulsive, erotic and finally uncertain and confused. When the camera is not tracing the contours of sweat and skin, it seems to enter some other, suspended realm, with shots of the city

and Julie's emboldened and sexually confident presence as she strides about Paris, fearless in love. Indoors, sexual intensity pervades domestic rituals, rendering them subordinate and unimportant. A parental visit is hastily brought to an end as Jack caresses Julie's knees while his father makes conversation.

The cinematic complement to sexual enthrallment in *Nuit et jour* is the visual beauty of Akerman's images. The grainy walls of the cheap apartment, the muted blues and warm reds, create a series of stunning tableaux through which the striking and unconventionally beautiful Julie and the excessively pretty and feminine Jack both move.

Nuit et jour abandons the anger and intensity of much of Akerman's earlier work. She has never created strongly focused narrative films but neither has her work sat comfortably with either the avant-garde or the theoretically led feminist film practice of the 70s and 80s. Hers is an instinctive, emotional and sexually ambiguous cinema. While both its form and content are deeply intertwined with the concerns of feminists working in film, there is also a distance, an auteurist insistence on an individual voice and vision. Akerman's concerns are elusive and unresolved, making her films a pleasure to watch, and their reappearance in *Nuit et jour* is what elevates it above mere love story.

At one level, *Nuit et jour* is romantic to the point of banality, but the androgyny and femininity of the boys, who look exactly like each other, and Julie's guiltless exploration of her sexuality (a real 60s heroine), subvert the film at just that point. Similarly, when Julie gets up and walks away, without having suffered, without having been victimised and without even having had to justify her duplicity, the film's real character is apparent.

Angela McRobbie

Once Upon a Crime

USA 1992

Director: Eugene Levy

Certificate
PG

Distributor
Entertainment
Production Company
Troublemakers
Productions
For Dino De Laurentiis
Communications
Executive Producer
Martha De Laurentiis

Producer
Dino De Laurentiis
Line Producer
Lucio Trentini
Production Co-ordinators
Europe:
Lisa Dasteel
LA:
Kenneth Patrick
Murray

Unit Managers
Roberto Malerba
Fabio Massimo
Dell'Orco
Production:
Lucio Trentini
Location Manager
Gilles Normandin
Post-production
Co-ordinator
Beverly Cusack

Casting
Francesco Cinieri
Assistant Directors
Juan Carlos Rodero
Lopez
Luca Lachin
Enrico Mastracchi
Manes

Screenplay
Charles Shyer
Nancy Meyers
Steve Kluger
Based on a story
by Rodolfo Sonego
and a screenplay
by Rodolfo Sonego,
Giorgio Arlorio,
Stefano Strucchi,
Luciano Vincenzoni

Director of Photography
Giuseppe Rotunno

Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operator
Gianni Fiore
Editor
Patrick Kennedy
Production Designer
Pier Luigi Basile
Set Decorator
Gianfranco Fumagalli

Music
Richard Gibbs
Orchestrations
Philip Giffin
Music Supervisor
Jolene Cherry
Music Editor
Allan K. Rosen
Costume Design
Molly Maginnis

Costumers
Key Men:
Silvio Scavano
Set:
Carla Latini
Giampiero Grassi
Make-up Artists
Ben Nye Jnr
Stefano Fava
Titles/Opticals
Cinema Research
Corporation
Dialogue Supervisor
Val Kuklowsky

Sound Editors
Noah Blough
Clayton Collins
Zack Davis
Robert Ulrich
ADR Supervisor
Val Kuklowsky
ADR Editor
Lily Diamond
Foley Editor
Tom Hammond
Sound Recordist
Ivan Sharrock
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Robert Litt
Elliot Tyson
Steve Maslow
ADR:
Dean Drabin
Sound Effects Supervisor
Sandy Gendler
Special Vocal Effects
Frank Welker
Foley
Taj Soundworks
Production Assistant
Antonia Imperoli
Animal Trainer
Massimo Perla

Cast
John Candy
Augie Morosco
James Belushi
Neil Schwary
Cybill Shepherd
Marilyn Schwary
Sean Young
Phoebe
Richard Lewis
Julian Peters
Ornella Muti
Elena Morosco
Giancarlo Giannini
Inspector Bonnard
George Hamilton
Alfonso de la Pena
Roberto Sbaratto
Detective Toussaint
Joss Ackland
Hercules Popodopoulos
Ann Way
Housekeeper
Geoffrey Andrews
Butler
Caterina Boratto
Madame de Senneville
Elsa Martinelli
Agent Carla
Riccardo Parisio Perrotti
Nino Richelmy
Customs Officers
Mario De Candia
Witness
Giuseppe Perruccio
Policeman
Alessandro Amen
Porter
Francesco Angrisano
Train Passenger
Georges Carlo
Hotel de Paris
Concierge
Benedetto Fanna
Hôtel de Paris
Room Waiter
Christian Bianchi
Marco Martinuzzi
Casino Waiters
Charles Dubourgeot
Casino Employee
Napoleon
Napoleon

8,485 feet
94 minutes

struggling actor. Resentfully, Phoebe agrees to split the reward, and the two set off by train for Monte Carlo, where Mme Van Dougen lives. Also on board are an American couple, Neil and Marilyn Schwary. Neil believes he has an unbeatable system for roulette, but is warned off gambling by fellow passenger Augie Morosco.

On arrival at Monte Carlo, Neil heads straight for the tables and is soon cleaned out, while Marilyn, with the help of Greek plutocrat Hercules Popodopoulos, wins half-a-million dollars. Neil re-encounters Augie who – to the fury of his wife Elena – is playing a winning streak; but his luck runs out, and both men are broke again. Meanwhile, delivering the dachshund to Mme Van Dougen's villa, Phoebe and Julian find the old lady murdered. They flee in panic, leaving behind Phoebe's suitcase, and when Julian returns to retrieve it, he is arrested by police inspector Bonnard.

Neil, knowing nothing of Marilyn's winnings, steals a suitcase he thinks contains money, but back at the hotel discovers Mme Van Dougen's dismembered body inside. Escaping by train, Neil and Marilyn try to plant the case on a fellow passenger. Trying to dispose of the incriminating dachshund, Phoebe is arrested, as are Neil and Marilyn. Their statements implicate Augie and Elena, whom Bonnard also brings in for questioning, along with Alfonso de la Pena, a gigolo who has been romancing Elena.

Despite frantic lying by all parties, Bonnard unmasks the true culprits: Mme Van Dougen's servants, who killed her to keep custody of the dog, her sole heir. Inspector Bonnard gives a dinner party for all the released suspects – with the exception of Alfonso, who has secured the dachshund and the Van Dougen fortune.

● Seven different people are credited with a hand in the script of *Once Upon a Crime*, and it's tempting to wonder if any of them were ever in the same room together. The film gives the impression of having been assembled, at great haste and in a state of panic, from bits and pieces left over from several other 'international comedies'. So we get the old-dark-house routine, the switched-suitcases routine, and a whole lot more, all equally weary. Some of the dialogue sounds like reject lines from a *Carry On* movie ("Madame, I admire your insouciance"; "Well, it's the dress, it shows everything"), and at one point the film even sinks to stealing the boiling-tea-in-the-crotch gag from *Young Frankenstein*.

The one element no one thought to toss into the mix, unluckily, is humour. For all the frantic activity, the shouting and waving of arms (especially from John Candy and James Belushi), there's scarcely a laugh in the whole sorry business. As the police inspector, Giancarlo Giannini wanders through with an air of melancholy disbelief. As well he might.

Philip Kemp



Empire of the senses: Guillaîne Londez

● Phoebe, an American tourist stranded in Rome, finds a lost dachshund whose owner, Mme Van Dougen, is offering a large reward. The dog is also spotted by Julian Peters, a

Patriot Games

USA 1992

Director: Phillip Noyce

Certificate

15
Distributor
 UIP
Production Company
 Paramount
Executive Producer
 Charles H. Maguire
Producers
 Mace Neufeld
 Robert Rehme
Associate Producer
 Lis Kern
Production Office
Co-ordinator
 Debbie Schwab
Production Co-ordinator
 Janine Lodge
Production Manager
 Denise O'Dell
Unit Production Manager
 William C. Gerrity
Location Managers
 Stuart A. Neumann
 UK:
 Malcolm Christopher
 Rachel Neale
2nd Unit Director
 David R. Ellis
Casting
 Amanda Mackey
 Cathy Sandrich
 UK/Ireland:
 John Hubbard
 Ros Hubbard
 Associate:
 Julie Hutchinson
 Voice:
 Barbara Harris
Assistant Directors
 Dennis Maguire
 Mathew J. Dunne
 2nd Unit:
 Christopher T. Gerrity
 James W. Greenhut
 John G. Scotti
 UK: Tim Lewis
 Robert Fabbri
 Richard Whelan
 UK 2nd Unit:
 Ian Hickinbotham
 Paul Taylor
 Justin Muller
Screenplay
 W. Peter Iliff
 Donald Stewart
 Steven Zaillian
 Based on the novel by
 Tom Clancy
Directors of Photography
 Donald McAlpine
 UK:
 Stephen Smith
 James Devis
 Panavision
Colour
 Technicolor
2nd Unit Director of Photography
 Michael A. Benson
Camera Operators
 Mark O'Kane
 Mike St Hilaire
 UK:
 Jeremy Gee
Video Co-ordinator
 Chris Warren
Visual Effects and Video Displays
 Video Image:
 Rhonda C. Gunner
 Richard E. Hollander
 Gregory L. McMurry
 John C. Walsh
 Crew:
 Glenn Neufeld
 Janet Earl
 Antoine Durr
 Scott Giegler
 Gregg Kozikowski
 Scott Peterson
 Dean Striepeke
 Monte Swann
 Larry Weiss
 Process Co-ordinator:
 Robert Grasmere
Process Compositing
 Hansard

Editors

Neil Travis
 William Hoy
 2nd Unit:
 (Additional)
 Lisa M. Citron
Production Designer
 Joseph Nemec III
Art Directors
 Joseph P. Lucky
 UK:
 Alan Cassie
Set Design
 Walter P. Martishius
Art Department
Co-ordinator
 Carla Sue Nemec
Set Decorator
 John M. Dwyer
Set Dresser
 Stephenie MacMillan
Production Illustrator
 David J. Negron Jnr
Storyboard Artist
 Roger Deer
Special Effects
Co-ordinator
 Dale L. Martin
Special Effects Supervisor
 George Gibbs
Special Effects
 Joel Quinlivan
 Terry King
 Robert Worthington
 Frank Foster
 Jim Rollins
 Leo Solis
 UK:
 Joss Williams
 Clive Beard
 Trevor Neighbour
 Andy Williams
Music
 James Horner
Music Performed by
 Vocals:
 Maggie Boyle
Orchestrations
 John Neufeld
 Additional:
 Conrad Pope
Music Editor
 Jim Henrickson
Songs
 "Washington Post
 March" by John Philip
 Sousa; "Harry's Game"
 by P. Brennan,
 performed by Clannad;
 "The Pride of Our
 Land" by Padraig
 Duggan, Noel Duggan,
 performed by Blended
 Spirits
Costume Design
 Norma Moriceau
Costume Supervisors
 Christine Heinz
 Michael W. Hoffman
 UK:
 Rosemary Burrows
Costumers
 Charles R. de Muth
 Leslie Joyce
 Ronald V. Barry
 UK:
 Colin Wilson
 Janet Tebrooke
Make-up Artists
 Peter Robb-King
 Patricia A. Gerhardt
 UK:
 Jane Royle
 Norma Webb
Title Design
 Bob Dawson
Supervising Sound Editors
 George Watters II
 Cecelia Hall
Supervising ADR Editor
 Juno J. Ellis
ADR Editor
 Denise Horta
Supervising Foley Editor
 Victoria Martin
Foley Editors
 Matt Harrison
 Les Wolf

Sound Recordists

Jack Solomon
 ADR:
 Bob Baron
 Foley:
 Greg Curda
 Music:
 Shawn Murphy
 UK:
 Ivan Sharrock
 Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
 Andy Nelson
 Steve Pederson
 Tom Perry
Sound Effects Editors
 F. Hudson Miller
 R. J. Palmer
 Frank Howard
 Howell Gibbins
 Larry Mann
 Suhail Kafity
 Noah Blough
Sound Effects Created by
 John Fasal
Foley Artists
 Ken Dufva
 David Lee Fein
Navy Technical Advisers
 Captain Michael
 T. Sherman
 Lieutenant James
 E. Brooks
Production Assistants
 Robert Newlin-
 Mazaraki
 Scott W. Anderson
 Aaron M. Albuchoer
 Joseph E. Lotito
 Sean McCarron
 Patricia B. Klug
 Eduardo Andrade
 Gary Robinson
 UK Office:
 Laragh O'Dell
 Samantha Thomas
Stunt Co-ordinators
 David R. Ellis
 Steve Boyum
 UK:
 Martin Grace
Stunts
 Greg Barnett
 Bobby Bass
 Janet Brady
 Michael Brady
 David Burton
 William H. Burton
 Clarke Coleman
 Cynthia Cypert
 Jeff Dashnaw
 Steve Davison
 Jim Davison
 Annie Ellis
 Chenda Ellis
 Richard Ellis
 Kenny Endoso
 Tony Epper
 Jim Halty
 Scott W. Hubbell
 Jeff Imada
 Henry Kingi
 Joel Kramer
 Terry J. Leonard
 John Meier
 Gary McLarty
 Bennie Moore
 Alan Olney
 Chuck Picerni Jnr
 Steve Picerni
 Chad Randall
 Dick Ziker
 UK:
 Andy Bradford
 Gerry Crampton
 Gabe Cronnelly
 Elaine Ford
 Paul Jennings
 Phil Lonergan
 Mark McBride
 Valentino Musetti
 Tony Van Silva
 Rod Woodruff
Helicopter Pilots
 Craig Hosking
 Cliff Fleming
 Harold D. Hauss
 Chris B. Saunders

Cast

Harrison Ford
 Jack Ryan
Anne Archer
 Cathy Ryan
Patrick Bergin
 Kevin O'Donnell
Sean Bean
 Sean Miller

Thora Birch

Sally Ryan
James Fox
 Lord Holmes
Samuel L. Jackson
 Robby
Polly Walker
 Annette
J. E. Freeman
 Marty Cantor
James Earl Jones
 Admiral Greer
Richard Harris
 Paddy O'Neil
Alex Norton
 Dennis Cooley
Hugh Fraser
 Watkins
David Threlfall
 Inspector Highland
Alan Armstrong
 Owens
Berlinda Tolbert
 Sissy
Hugh Ross
 Barrister Atkinson
Gerald Sim
 Lord Justice
Pip Torrens
 1st Aide
Thomas Russell
 Ashley
Jonathan Ryan
 Jimmy O'Reardon
Andrew Connolly
 Charlie Dugan
Karl Hayden
 Paddy Boy
Claire Oberman
 Lady Holmes
Oliver Stone
 Young Holmes
Tom Watt
 Electrician
P. H. Moriarty
 Court Guard
Rebecca Mayhook
 Schoolgirl
Roger Blake
Martin Cochrane
Tim Dutton
 Constables
Ellen Geer
 Rose
John Lafayette
 Winter
Duke Mooskian
 Ferro
Fritz Sperberg
 Spiva
Brenda Klemme
 Secretary
Allison Barron
 CIA Analyst
Theodore Raimi
 CIA Technician
Gregory Paul Jackson
 Taxi Driver
Philip Levien
 Dr Shapiro
Jesse Goins
 FBI Agent Shaw
John Shepard
 FBI Helicopter Pilot
Stephen Held
 FBI Rifleman
Deborah Weston
 CNN Reporter
Bob Guntton
 Interviewer
Ivan Kane
Kim Delgado
 TV Reporters
Keith Campbell
 Ned Clark
Jeff Mandon
Eric Paul
 Marine Guards
Jeff Gardner
Lester T. Tillery
Franklin Dam
Frankie Maldonado
Bonnie Webster
Pamela Saxon
Leah Tabassi
 Midshipmen
Michael Ryan Way
 Avery
Fred Toma
 Arab Soldier
Ruben Garfias
 Anesthesiologist
Michael Francis Kelly
 O'Neil's Bodyguard

10,520 feet
 117 minutes

Jack Ryan, a former CIA analyst, is on holiday in London with his wife and daughter when he witnesses a terrorist attack on Lord Holmes, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Queen's cousin. Ryan intervenes as the terrorists attempt to pull Holmes from his car, and in the ensuing scuffle he is wounded while shooting dead one of the assailants. Another of the terrorists, Sean Miller, is captured by the police and later convicted for his part in the affair. Meanwhile, Ryan is awarded a knighthood for his bravery, recuperates in hospital (expertly tended by his doctor wife Cathy), and then returns to the US where he is a lecturer at a naval college.

In Northern Ireland, there is violent in-fighting between the terrorist factions, some of whom want to pursue a more hard-line policy. Kevin O'Donnell, the leader of the extreme wing who planned the attack on Holmes, now masterminds a bloody rescue of Sean Miller as the latter is being transferred to a prison on the Isle of Wight. O'Donnell's new plan is to attack Holmes when he visits the US; Miller is glad to accompany him, because the man Ryan killed was Miller's younger brother and he has sworn revenge.

After giving a lecture, Ryan notices that he is being followed. He manages to kill his pursuer, but realises that Miller is at large and is threatening his family. Miller attacks Ryan's wife and daughter on a crowded freeway, forcing them off the road. They are badly hurt and there is briefly a danger that the pregnant Cathy will lose her baby. Determined now to destroy Miller and his group, Ryan rejoins the CIA. From satellite surveillance, the CIA learn that the terrorists are in a North African training camp, and an attack is planned by the SAS. They manage to raze the camp, but some of the terrorists escape.

Lord Holmes arrives in the US, and interrupts his schedule to visit Ryan and award him his KBE. But one of Holmes' aides is an informer, and he notifies the terrorists of the peer's movements. As Jack is about to receive his knighthood and his daughter arrives home from hospital, the terrorists break into the house, and again it is Ryan's ingenuity that saves Holmes' life. As a decoy, he jumps into a speedboat and heads out to sea during a

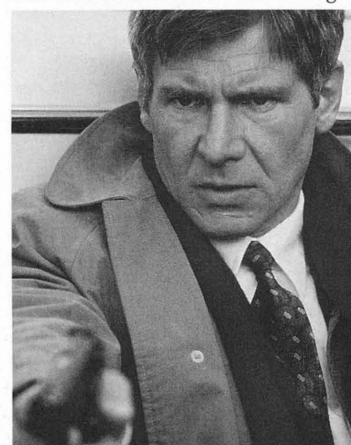
storm, pursued by Miller and O'Donnell. When he realises that Holmes has escaped them, O'Donnell orders Miller to turn back, but the latter refuses and shoots him. Ryan and Miller fight it out on the high seas, until Miller is impaled on an anchor. Ryan is rescued and restored to his family.

With the Soviet Union out of commission and Indiana Jones in mothballs, Hollywood must find new territories for its secret service and fresh roles for Harrison Ford. *Patriot Games* (like *The Hunt for Red October*, adapted from a fat Tom Clancy novel) attempts to move beyond the Cold War and the Temple of Doom. It proves a perilous journey: early hints that the film will strive to analyse Anglo/Irish/US relations and get to the heart of the 'Irish problem' are misleading. The English are depicted as either toffs or policemen from the era of Dixon of Dock Green, while the Irish dress in thick jumpers and sit in the pub listening to Clannad music when they are not out on their bombing raids.

The plot creaks under the weight of numerous red herrings and half-developed characters, including an aristocratic terrorist in the Rose Dugdale mould and a sinister Peter Lorre-like bookseller. Director Phillip Noyce has clearly eschewed any attempt at pulling together the various narrative strands, and instead concentrates on working up a head of steam. The film rattles along breathlessly from set-piece to set-piece. Harrison Ford is allowed to rehearse his full range of characters: he is at once the reborn, sensitive husband and father from *Regarding Henry*, the impressive executive from *Working Girl*, and the irrepressible, indestructible hero we know from Spielberg and Lucas. The film's overriding concern is not with political turmoil but with protecting the all-American nuclear family, which might as well have been assailed by spiders, sharks or disease as by terrorists.

From CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, to the Old Bailey in London and graffiti-strewn Belfast, the production design is exhaustively detailed and crammed with state-of-the-art surveillance equipment. At the level of Saturday-morning action-adventure, this easily passes muster, but the suspicion persists that the film has a hidden agenda and that it just won't do to glide over the political quagmire. *Patriot Games* simply aesthetises the conflict in Ulster, as if trying to cash in on the fashionability of Irish themes and locations. The title itself seems to hint that this is a bit of a lark, and the playing from a galaxy of character actors - James Earl Jones, Richard Harris, James Fox - is tongue-in-cheek. Noyce fitfully strikes a sombre note but the mood is never sustained. In the end, this is an enjoyable, mildly baffling film in which there is a serious mismatch between the craftsmanship with which it has been fashioned and the superficiality of its story and characterisation.

Geoffrey Macnab



Indestructible and reborn: Harrison Ford

The Power of One

USA 1991

Director: John G. Avildsen

Certificate
12

Distributor
Warner Bros

Production Company
Warner Bros

Executive Producers
Steven Reuther
Graham Burke
Greg Coote

Executive-in-charge of Production
Richard Gelfand

Producer
Arnon Milchan

Line Producer
Roy Button

Associate Producer
Doug Seelig

Production Associate
W.M.A. Johnson

Production Supervisors
Kevin de la Noy
Rory Kilalea

Production Co-ordinator
Carol Regan

Location Managers
Nick Daubeney
Paul Fisher
Hilton Bales Smith

Post-production Supervisor
Doreen A. Dixon

Casting
Caro Jones
UK:
Karen Lindsay-Stewart
Zimbabwe:
Paul Tingay
South Africa:
Pat Cordes
Voice:
Barbara Harris

Assistant Directors
Clifford Coleman
Tim Lewis
Adam Somner
Peter Heslop
Chris Brock
Alan Mullen

Screenplay
Robert Mark Kamen
Based on the novel
by Bryce Courtenay

Director of Photography
Dean Semler

Colour
Technicolor

Matte Photography
Glenn Campbell

Camera Operators
Mary O'Kane
2nd:
Martin Kenzie
Additional:
Mike Roberts
David Worley

Steadicam Operator
Mary O'Kane

Opticals
Pacific Title
Cinema Research
Corporation
Sony High Definition
Facilities

Matte Artist
Paul Curley

Editors
John G. Avildsen
Film:
Trevor Jolly
Boxing Scene:
Lawrence Bibi

Associate Editor
Douglas Brumer

Production Designer
Roger Hall

Art Directors
Supervising:
Les Tomkins
Zimbabwe:
Martin Hitchcock
UK:
Kevin Phipps

Set Decorator
Karen Brookes

Storyboard Artist
Keith Crossley

Special Effects Supervisor
Garth Inns

Special Effects
Paul Corbould
Dominic Tuony

Music
Hans Zimmer
Additional:
Lebo M

Music Extract
"Symphony No. 9" by
Ludwig van Beethoven

Orchestrations
Bruce Fowler

Music Supervisor
Hilton Rosenthal

Music Editor
Laura Perlman

Songs
"Concerto for the
Southland" by Johnny
Clegg; "The Mourning
Song" by Johnny Clegg,
performed by The
Masibemunya
Bulawayo Choir;
"Mother Africa",
"Rainmaker", "The
Penny Whistle Song"
by Hans Zimmer, Lebo
M; "Hambani" by
Victor Ndazilwane,
performed by The
Bantu Glee Singers;
"Daisy Bell (A Bicycle
Built for Two)",
performed by The
Bulawayo Concert
Band; "Diala Ndlovu",
"Asakhele", "Inkunzi"
performed by
The Masibemunya
Bulawayo Choir

Costume Design
Tom Rand

Costume Supervisor
Ron Beck

Wardrobe
Men:
Colin Wilson
Women:
Janet Tebrooke

Chief Make-up Artist
Peter Frampton

Make-up Artist
Amanda Knight

Title Design
B.D. Fox & Friends

Supervising Sound Editor
Jeffrey Rosen

Sound Editors
Ralph Osborn
Pat McCormick

Supervising ADR Editor
Doreen A. Dixon

ADR Editors
Jerelyn J. Harding
Lauren Palmer
James A. Borgardt
Renee Tondelli

Foley Editor
Jonathan Klein

Sound Recordists
Clive Winter

Music:
Jay Rifkin

ADR Recordist
Christine Tucker

Foley Recordist
Dean Drabin

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists
Gary Bourgeois
Adam Jenkins
Scott Millan

Sound Effects Editors
Joel Valentine
Fred Cipriano

Foley Artists
Sarah Monat
Robin Harlan

Boxing Adviser
Bill Wallace

Project Consultant
Bryce Courtenay

Post-production Assistants

Richard Alan Elias
Vladimir Goncharov
Barbara Miletich
Stunt Co-ordinator
Eddie Stacey
Boxing Trainer
Tom Muzilla

Cast

Guy Witcher
P.K., age 7
Simon Fenton
P.K., age 12
Stephen Dorff
P.K., age 18
John Gielgud
Headmaster St. John
Armin Mueller-Stahl
Doc
Morgan Freeman
Geel Piet
Nomadzi Kabehe
Nanny
Agatha Hurl
Midwife
Nigel Ivy
Newborn P.K.
Tracy Brooks Swope
Mother
Brendan Deary
P.K. Infant
Winston Mangwarara
Tonderai Infant
Tonderai Masenda
Tonderai
Cecil Zilla Mamanzi
Ranch Foreman
John Turner
Afrikaaner Minister
Robbie Bullock
Jaapie Botha
Gordon Arnell
Minister at Mother's
Funeral
Jeremiah Misi
Dabula Manzi
Paul Tingay
Grandfather
Hywell Williams
Captain
Michael Brunner
Kommandant Van Zyl
Clive Russell
Sergeant Bormann
Gert Van Niekerk
Lieutenant Smit
Winston Ntshona
Mlungisi
Ed Beeten
Prison Commissioner
Dominic Walker
Morrie Guilbert
Robert Thomas Reed
School Fight Opponent
Fay Masterson
Maria Marais
Roy Francis
Referee

Clare Cobbold
Natalie Morse
Maria's Friends
Alois Moyo
Gideon Duma
John Osborne
School Gate Guard
Simon Shumba
Man Without Pass
Stan Leih
Rod Campbell
Van Cops
Adam Fogerty
Andreas Malan
Ian Roberts
Hoppe Gruenewald
Tony Denham
Boxing Partner
Marius Weyers
Professor Daniel Marais
Eric Nobbs
Edward Jordan
City Cops
Brian O'Shaughnessy
Colonel Bretyn
Daniel Craig
Sergeant Botha
Faith Edwards
Miriam Sisulu
Raymond Barreto
Indian Referee
Liz Ngwenya
Nganga Ancient
Woman
Andrew Whaley
Ticket Taker
Dominic Makuwachuma
Joshua
Lungani Sibanda
Akim Mwale
Pesedena Dinah
Rosemary Chikobwe
Sibanda
Martha Gibson Mtika
Joel Phiri
Peggy Moyo
David Khabo
David Guwaza
Students
Robin Annison
Anita
Christien Anholt
Dinner Date
Nigel Pegram
Guest
Jon Cartwright
Jacob
Rev. Peter Van Vuuren
Minister at Maria's
Funeral
Marcia Coleman
Woman Guest
Banele Dala Moyo
Boy Who Reads

11,425 feet
127 minutes



Including the Karate Kid: Stephen Dorff, John Gielgud

extracts a translation from Piet, who subsequently dies from the beating. Johannesburg, 1948. P.K. attends the Prince of Wales School whose headmaster, St John, suggests he try for an Oxford scholarship. P.K. continues to box, training at a club open to all races, and catches the eye of Maria - daughter of Daniel Marais, a leading figure in the Nationalist Party who vainly tries to stifle their relationship. P.K. arranges to fight a black boxer, Gideon Duma, outside Johannesburg in the Alexandra township. P.K.'s win cements their friendship.

After Duma urges him to help spread literacy, P.K. organises a secret class for blacks at his school. P.K., however, has been under police surveillance and the class is disbanded. The police - led by Jaapie Botha, now a sergeant - also set fire to the boxing club. The class resumes in a church but Botha's forces break in, killing Maria in the fracas. Botha's men then target Alexandra, setting buildings on fire, but Botha is prevented from shooting P.K. by a lethal blow from Duma. P.K. decides to forego Oxford. Instead, he joins Duma, setting out for Pretoria to help unite the people of South Africa.

In the early stages, it looks as though *The Power of One* might be an engaging, if saccharine, tale of a South African childhood. P.K., the young hero of Bryce Courtenay's semi-autobiographical novel, grows up happily enough with giraffes on the veldt and a little white teddy bear. At boarding school, things get tougher: his mother dies, he is urinated upon, but the lad absorbs some restorative Zulu magic and still keeps flashing his big brown eyes. Then John G. Avildsen changes gear, abandons the ochre tints for a stark, dramatic lighting, and trains his gloating camera on Jaapie Botha's thugs, who kill P.K.'s pet chicken and string up its owner on a rope.

The ochre tints return but the film's trumpeted message of brotherhood

and peace is seriously compromised by the continuing violence. Avildsen's suspect technique and sensibility keep sabotaging his chances of creating a more thoughtful film. For scenes of P.K. supping upon the wisdom of nature, or learning at the feet of Armin Mueller-Stahl's stranded liberal German, Doc, Avildsen dips into glossy calendar photography: two figures silhouetted before the setting sun; a boy alone before a thunderous waterfall. And when racist brutality is required, Avildsen the crowd-pleaser is ever at the ready with beatings, head bashing and rivers of blood, all staged for maximum impact. The end titles burble with pride about the importance of uniting Africa's people but the take-home image for most audiences will be Jaapie Botha, the indestructible thug who will stop at nothing to destroy P.K.

Other influences which intrude upon Courtenay's story include *The Karate Kid* which surfaces once the put-upon hero learns self-defence, and P.K.'s boxing and jogging jaunt through the township inevitably recalls *Rocky*. Memories of Avildsen's past might have surfaced less if the script had been sturdier, but Robert Mark Kamen's adaptation overloads the available two hours with jumbled episodes precariously linked by a commentary drawn from Courtenay's novel ("The loneliness birds began circling again...").

P.K.'s educational days with Doc and Geel Piet are handled best. Thereafter, Avildsen's film rapidly disintegrates under joint pressure from the inflammatory violence and a spectacularly mishandled romance with the schoolgirl Maria. "Inclusion, not exclusion, is the key to survival" John Gielgud tells his pupils at the Prince of Wales School. Exclusion of discordant ingredients, however, would certainly have helped *The Power of One* to greater distinction.

Geoff Brown

Stone Cold

USA 1992

Director: Craig R. Baxley

Certificate
18

Distributor
Columbia TriStar

Production Company
Stone Group Pictures
A Mace Neufeld/Yoram Ben Ami/Walter Doniger production

Executive Producers
Walter Doniger
Gary Wichard

Producer
Yoram Ben Ami

Co-producers
Andrew D. T. Pfeffer
Nick Grillo

Associate Producer
Udi Nedivi

Executive-in-charge of Production
Avram Butch Kaplan

Production Controller
Catherine Roehl

Production Co-ordinator
Sandra Maltz

Unit Production Manager
Yoram Ben Ami

Location Managers
Kim "Krash" Davis
Additional Photography:
Todd Schneider

Executive-in-charge of Post-production
Brad Arensman

Casting
Extras:
Evelyn Dorn Yates

Assistant Directors
Benjamin Rosenberg
Michael Samson
Dana J. Kuznetzkoff
John Gallagher

Screenplay
Walter Doniger

Director of Photography
Alexander Gruszynski

Colour
DeLuxe

Additional Photography
Arthur Botham

Aerial Photography
David L. Butler

Camera Operators
Richard Merryman
"B" Operator:
Scott Smith

Additional Photography:
Richard Merryman

Editors
Mark Helfrich

Film:
Larry Bock
Edward A.
Warschilka Jnr

Associate Editor
Chris Jackson

Production Designers
John Mansbridge
Richard Johnson

Set Decorator
Phil Shirey

Set Dressers
On set:
David McGrath
Tana Bishop
Joanna Gilliam

Special Effects Co-ordinator
B. Russell Hessey

Special Effects Foreman
Richard Ratliff

Music
Sylvester Levay

Music Supervisor
Dick Rudolph

Supervising Music Editor
Allan K. Rosen

Songs
"Dangerous" by Pat Simmons, performed by The Doobie Brothers;
"Moonlight Dream" by Wire Train, Kevin Hunter, performed by Wire Train; "Ooh Baby", "Johnny Was a User" by Paul Colt, Pete Sykes, Ricky Hart, Steve Rose, performed by Cryer; "Coming Home" by Jason Bieler, Matt Kramer, performed by

Saigon Kick; "Fatal Kiss" by Elaine Summers, Daniel Pinnella, performed by Elaine's Treehouse; "She's Got a Hold on Me" by and performed by Martin Blockson; "Eyes" by Tony Humecke, Kimiko Kasai, Trisha Kelly, performed by Kimiko Kasai; "Proud" by and performed by Sean Keller; "You're My Man" by and performed by Eve Moon

Costume Design
Tammy Mor

Wardrobe
Rina Ramon
Shawna Leavell

Make-up Artists
Key:
Margaux L. Lancaster
Michele Bloom

Titles/Opticals
Howard Anderson

Supervising Sound Editors
Richard Shorr
Victor Iorlilo

Sound Editors
Richard P. Dwan Jnr
Edmund J. Lachman
Linda Moss
Catherine Shorr
Ascher Yates
Victor Iorlilo

ADR Supervisor
Clifford Latimer

ADR Editor
Cynthia Haagens

Foley Editors
Shawn Sykora
Willy R. Allen

Sound Recordist
Stacy Brownrigg
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordinists
Wayne Artman
Frank Jones
Tom E. Dahl

Voice Group Co-ordinator
Susan G. Elliot

Sound Transfers
John Soukup
Bob Battershall

Sound Effects
Richard Shorr

Production Assistants
Key Set:
Susan Pickett
Amy Lynn
Adam Beason
Jim Tosney

Stunt Co-ordinator
Paul Baxley

Stunts
Dan Barringer
Gary Baxley
Henry Kingi
Keith Campbell
Matt Johnson
Mary Albee
John Borlund
Jophery Brown
Gene Hartline
Paul M. Lane
Mike Kirtan
Gary McLarty
Dan Epper
Dan Wynands
Alan Wyatt
Richard Humphreys
Kurt Lott
Jay Currin
Jim Stephan
Albert Leong
Rick Blackwell
Leon Delaine
Steve Vandeman
Ed Hamilton
Lane Levitt
Bob Orrison

Weapons Master
Randy E. Moore

Helicopter Pilot
Mike Tamburro

Cast
Brian Bosworth
Joe Huff, "John Stone"
Lance Henriksen
Chains Cooper
William Forsythe
Ice
Arabella Holzbog
Nancy
Sam McMurray
Lance
Richard Gant
Cunningham
Paulo Tocha
Bolivian
David Tress
Brent Whipperton
Evan James
Gut
Tony Pierce
Tool
Billy Million
Trouble Owens
Robert Winley
Mudfish
Gregory Scott Cummins
A.W.O.L.
Demetre Phillips
Greek
Magic Schwartz
Poker
Brenda Klemme
Marie
Paul M. Lane
Vitamin
Gene Hartline
Leroy
John Haterley
Hooter
Tracy Hutchinson
Pool-playing Chick
Jennifer Synnott
Ice's Girl
Rick L. Birchfield
One Eye
John R. Grantham
Big John
Alfred Stepputat
Smokey
Thomas F. Ibarra
Six Pack
Michael Wren
Martinez

Bill Gratton
Judge Townsend
Jerry Colker
Market Psycho
Michael James
Larry
David Eisley
Charlie
Ron Recasner
Police Officer
Charles Stranski
Police Lieutenant
Rene O'Connor
Tinseltooth
Maggie Egan
Mother
Benjamin Rosenberg
Domici
Frank Ferrara
Troy Brown
Henchmen
Robert Prentiss
Kevin Page
Mobsters
Folkert Schmidt
Matt D. Johnston
Guardsmen
Josie Dapar
Madame Lu
Boyce Holleman
County Judge
Nick Demitri
Dave Efron
Truckers
Tom Magee
Mountain
Janis Flax
Nurse
John Terrence
Minister
Laura Albert
Joe's Girlfriend
Karen Abernathy
News Anchor
Illana Shoshan
Sharon
Mzu
Fido

8,279 feet
92 minutes

Alabama cop Joe Huff is recruited by the FBI to conduct an undercover investigation of The Brotherhood, a violent biker gang strongly suspected of assassinating the judge who passed a forty-five-year sentence on one of their members, convicted killer Trouble Owens. Huff is teamed up with the unsuitable Lance as bureau liaison, and adopting the leather-clad guise of a biker, he travels to Mississippi under the alias John Stone and gains access to The Brotherhood's rallying point near Biloxi.

Ignoring the suspicions of his right-hand man Ice, gang leader Chains Cooper agrees to admit Stone to The Brotherhood on the condition that he murder a rival drug dealer – a task the FBI man accomplishes by providing carefully faked evidence of the victim's death. Meanwhile, District Attorney and prospective gubernatorial candidate "Whip" Whipperton has called in the National Guard. But Chains' cold-blooded shooting of two of the soldiers disgusts his girlfriend Nancy, suggesting to Stone that she might be a potential prosecution witness. Stone narrowly escapes detection when Ice is killed in a motorcycle chase after spotting Stone meeting with Lance. Stone manages to convince Nancy that he isn't a cop, even though she has been warned of the newcomer's suspect credentials by Chains' contact in the local Highway Patrol.

Failing to frame the bikers and the Mafia with a planted truckload of P2P, the chemical base for the drug crack, Stone's cover is blown when the sup-

posedly slain drug dealer returns to betray him. In a subsequent scuffle, Chains shoots both Nancy and the informant, taking Stone captive in order to use him as a diversion during The Brotherhood's planned bike and helicopter assault on the Biloxi courthouse where Whipperton is due to seek a revised death sentence for Owens. Disguised as a priest, Chains enters the hearing, kills Whipperton and tries to ride off with Owens. But Stone manages to escape from the helicopter and single-handedly thwarts their break-out attempt. Lance saves Stone's life by shooting Chains, and Stone walks out of the courthouse into the waiting crowd.

While most of the current crop of action leading men boast backgrounds in martial arts or body-building, Brian Bosworth follows 60s tough-guy performer Jim Brown by making the transition from an illustrious career in the National Football League. Bosworth comes to the film industry with a cohort of young male fans and a 'desirable' rebel image signified by trademark earring and spiky blond haircut. But for British viewers, largely unaware of his NFL reputation, this regulation biker flick will leave Bosworth trailing Van Damme, Seagal and Schwarzenegger, who have all widened their range outside the stunt and combat genre.

Yet if Bosworth is a limited actor at this point, despite a five-year apprenticeship with a respected acting coach, *Stone Cold* is carefully tailored to his abilities. Here the standard 'fish out of water' narrative is deployed in such a way that the protagonist must remain indifferent to the nefarious goings-on around him lest he reveal that he's a cop, which conveniently allows the leading man to set his features in the same grim non-expression that sustained Charles Bronson through an entire career.

The biker milieu seems purposely chosen so that Huff/Stone's ability to blend in lends his character an anti-establishment glamour-by-association entirely in keeping with Bosworth's desirable off-screen image. At the same time, the demands of the plot require that he remain on the right side of the law, although Craig Baxley passes up the opportunity to explore the moral schizophrenia inherent in such an undercover operation.

Not that one time stunt arranger Baxley (*Action Jackson*, *Dark Angel*) has much time for the niceties of characterisation. But he handles the brutality highlights and two-wheeled interludes more than efficiently, delivering the staple elements that are the genre's *sine qua non*: the scene in the Tit-for-Tat strip joint is leeringly prurient enough to satisfy the most hormonally active adolescent male, and the final-reel 'money shot', in which a riderless motorcycle flies out of a high window to collide with a conveniently passing helicopter, is positively Cormaneseque in its explosive zeal.

Trevor Johnston

Swoon

USA 1991

Director: Tom Kalin

Certificate
18

Distributor
Metro Pictures

Production Company
Intolerance

Executive Producers
Lauren Zalaznick
James Schamus

Producer
Christine Vachon

Co-producer
Tom Kalin

Line Producer
Lauren Zalaznick

Associate Producer
Peter Wentworth

Production Managers
Christopher Hoover
David Buckingham

Unit Manager
Matt Hensley

Location Managers
Robert Vazquez
Joe Kelly

Casting
Daniel Haughey

Assistant Directors
Christine Vachon
Daniel Haughey
Isabela Araujo

Screenplay
Tom Kalin

Screenplay Collaborator
Hilton Als

Director of Photography
Ellen Kuras

Editor
Tom Kalin

Production Designer
Thérèse Dépréz

Art Director
Stacey Jones

Music
James Bennett

Costume Design
Jessica Haston

Wardrobe Supervisor
Brenda Zagarinsky

Make-up
Jim Crawford

Sound Editor
Susan Demskey

Cast
Daniel Schlachet
Richard Loeb
Craig Chester
Nathan Leopold Jnr
Ron Vawter
State's Attorney Crowe
Michael Kirby
Detective Savage
Michael Stumm
Doctor Bowman
Valda Z. Drabla
Germaine Reinhardt
Natalie Stanford
Susan Lurie
Isabela Araujo
Mona Foot
Trash
Trasharama
Nashom Wooden
Venus in Furs Divas
Peter Bowen
Industrial Area
Workman
Ryan Landry
Drag Queen with Bob
Mona Foot
Herself
Christopher Hoover
Elektra Luxe
Paul Connor
Bobby Franks
Brent Charleton
Irving Hartman
Christopher Cangelosi
Little Boy in Park
Dick Callaghan
Craig Paul
Carlos Rodriguez
Elion Sacker
Emmitt Thrower
Eric J. Wiggins III
Country Workmen

Ken Howarth
Sven Englund,
Chauffeur
Barry Liebowitz
Mr Franks
Judith Boxley
Mrs Franks
Julian Marynczak
Workman in Marsh
Daniel Haughey
Ornithology Clerk
John Rowan
Man with Newspaper
Stanley Taub
Mr Loeb
Robert Austin
Allan Loeb
Barbara Bleier
Mrs Loeb
Ed Altman
Mike Leopold
John A. Mudd
Detective Sbarbaro
Robert Sullivan
Night Desk Officer
Verne F. Hoyt
Night Cop
James Cummings
Interrogation Cop
Peppe Vives
Night Detective
Malcolm A. Beers Jnr
Mr Leopold
Adina Porter
Stenographer
Robert Read
Clarence Darrow
Paul Schmidt
Judge Caverly
Richard Elovich
Doctor Hulbert
Christie MacFadyen
Robert McKanna
Bobby Reed
Reporters
Mark Simpson
Baillif
Ray Wasik
Mean Prison Guard
Jim Crawford
Prison Barber
Jean Claude Monfort
Michael Nesline
Richard R. Upton
William Walters
Clinic Doctors
Richard Schechner
Radio Announcer
Burt Wright
Warden
Glenn Backes
James Day
Paul Rubin
Father Weir
Philip Stanton
Gene Lovitz
Dean C. Bianco
Catarina Borelli
Barry Cassidy
David Cheever
James Crafford
Steven Flum
Lou Gallardo
Carl M. George
Debra Goodman
Joseph Harding
Anna Kohler
Heidi Kirz
Scott K. MacArthur
John McGee
Dana Nasrallah
Jerome F. Richards
Hobson Sturtevant
Elizabeth Towson
Courtroom Extras
Oscar Aleman
Emanuel Baetich
Robert Beck
Mike Diaz
Maddy Lederman
Tanya Taylor
Press Conference
Extras
Gary Lamadore
Interrogation Cop
Michael Becker
Zoe Bissell

Gregg Bordowitz
Patricia Fabricant
Todd Haynes
Andrea Kislán
Pamela Koffler
Craig Pault
Nina Port
Emily Sherman
Lauren Zalaznick
Phrenology Heads
Robert Funes
Timothy McCoy
Owen H. Ruff
Elion Sacker

Robert Vazquez
Alex Vean
Prisoners
Addison Cook
Douglas Leland
John Ventimiglia
Prison Guards
Douglas Crimp
Phelim Dolan
Jim Lyons
Prison Mugshots

8,416 feet
94 minutes

Chicago, 1923. Richard "Dick" Loeb and Nathan "Babe" Leopold are young lovers, who live with their families in the city's exclusive Hyde Park area. They take their pleasure in committing various crimes together, and for their latest adventure plan to kidnap one of their rich neighbour's children. After several months of planning, they pick on Bobby Franks and finally carry out the deed. The scheme goes awry, however, when Dick murders the child.

They hide the body in an area of marshland, and after cleaning up their rented car, decide to go ahead with the charade of the kidnap. They send a ransom note to Bobby's parents. Meanwhile, a rambler has discovered the child's body and also picked up Nathan's glasses at the same spot. The police later bring Nathan in for questioning, and he and Richard tell them that they were driving around with two girls that evening. Nathan is held as a suspect. When the Leopolds' chauffeur mentions that he was repairing Nathan's car on the night of the murder, the police realise that the two have been lying.

They confront Richard, who begins to confess, although he claims that it was Nathan who actually murdered Bobby. The two are brought to trial, where their defence attorney, Clarence Darrow, employs various specialists to give evidence as to the couple's 'deviant' nature and consequently pathological state of mind. They both receive life sentences.

In prison, Richard is murdered by a fellow inmate, James Day, who claims that Richard was sexually harassing him. Murder charges are dropped, and the grieving Nathan is put in isolation. Later, Nathan starts working as an X-ray technician. He was released from jail, we are told, thirty-three years later, and moved to Puerto Rico where he married and continued to work as an X-ray technician. He died in 1971, having donated his body for research. A blind woman received his eyes in a successful transplant operation.

"Killing Bobby Franks together will join Richard and I for life", reflects Nathan Leopold after the deed. Video artist Tom Kalin's sharp feature debut is about the forging of their unholy marriage. The infamous case has already formed the basis of Hitchcock's *Rope* and Richard Fleischer's *Compulsion* (via Patrick Hamilton's play and Meyer Levin's novel respectively). But *Swoon* erases the memory of both those versions, which only hinted at the central matter of the case – the fact that

the two eighteen-year-old culprits were gay and Jewish, and it was their race and sexuality that was put on trial. Kalin's film, shot in crisp black-and-white, incorporates anachronistic details, such as touch-tone telephones (shades of Derek Jarman's style), which resituate the story in a perpetual present: it is lucid, clear and cold in its telling.

Richard and Nathan's fabricated alibi for the night of the murder – that they were with two girls – assumes a resonance beyond the case in question. Indeed, Nathan maps out his future life – to go to Harvard, train as a lawyer and marry – as though it were some alibi of respectability. Ironically, in court, their gayness is presented by their lawyer Clarence Darrow as their defence – so that they get life rather than the death sentence – and becomes a pathological trait in itself. At the trial, they are called "Dickie" and "Babe" – nursery names which also imply their diminished status. Kalin most obviously embellishes the theme with the courtroom scene in which the two young men appear in bed together while psychologists – or 'alienists', as they were quaintly called then – and phrenologists give evidence. Kalin juxtaposes this with a sequence of other 'head' cases, in which behavioural and facial characteristics are matched up – this only a decade before Hitler.

But *Swoon* hardly rescues the beautifully poised Loeb and Leopold (actors Daniel Schlachet and Craig Chester have those clean-cut GQ good looks) as maligned gay heroes. Their relationship is at times erotic and tender – a scene in which they exchange rings delights in their besotted love. But they are also presented as vain, spoilt, and intellectually arrogant thrill seekers whose crime spree provides them with an aphrodisiac rush. Richard reclines in post-coital languor and rings up friends to invite them to cock-

tails while Nathan composes the ransom note addressed to a non-specific "Dear Sir". Any moral judgments on the pair, however, are qualified by the way their actions are set in the context of a time and place – Chicago, during the often violent Prohibition era. News footage recalls the speakeasies, bootlegging and other social features of 1923/24. Scenes from the not-so-celebrated history of drag tea parties – at which the guests play five card stud – and readings of Leopold von Masoch's *Venus in Furs* are meanwhile reconstructed in a stiffly stylised fashion.

Swoon opens with a quote from the von Masoch novel: "Now I know you, the dog-like nature that adores being kicked". It's a dream-like moment as the camera pans across an empty landscape occasionally studded with human mannequins, posed ready for the camera (camera lights loom in the background as obvious signals of artifice). The quote – which is repeated as a reprise – hangs over the film as though offering some explanation of the pair's relationship with each other and the world outside. "I wanted to murder the idea of suffering as my condition", Richard states. And replace it with suffering of their own creation.

Richard and Nathan's identities seem to be intertwined – indeed the murder makes them one. Richard confuses himself with Nathan when giving his evidence – "I" becomes "he" – while at other times there seems to be a terrible distance between the two. But if their relationship is a capricious one and somewhat elusive, there is one moment that profoundly touches on its depth. After Richard's murder, the grieving Nathan howls alone in his cell. The guards eventually bind him in a makeshift straitjacket. But it seems that he is being prepared in a winding cloth, mummified and ready for despatch on the pyre of his lover. The final swoon is death.

Lizzie Francke



He and I together: Craig Chester

Universal Soldier

USA 1992

Director: Roland Emmerich

Certificate
 18
Distributor
 Guild
Production Company
 Carolco International
Executive Producer
 Mario Kassar
Producers
 Allen Shapiro
 Craig Baumgarten
 Joel B. Michaels
Co-producer
 Oliver Eberle
Associate Producer
 Donald Heitzer
Production Executives
 Julie Bourne
 Ute Emmerich
Production Co-ordinator
 Jeanne Joe
Unit Production Manager
 Donald Heitzer
Location Manager
 Kenneth E. Fix
Post-production Supervisor
 Michael R. Sloan
Post-production Co-ordinator
 Noori Dehnahi
2nd Unit Director
 Vic Armstrong
Casting
 Penny Perry
 Annette Benson
Extras:
 Mai Gray
Assistant Directors
 Steve Love
 Robert Leveen
 Michael Viglietta
2nd Unit:
 John Woodward
 Thomas Schellenberg
Screenplay
 Richard Rothstein
 Christopher Leitch
 Dean Devlin
Director of Photography
 Karl Walter Lindenlaub
 Panavision
Colour
 Technicolor
2nd Unit Photography
 Dan Turett
Camera Operator
 Peter Krause
Steadicam Operator
 Chris Haarhoff
Gyrosphere Operator
 John A. Connell
Video Playback
 Robert Holland
2nd Unit:
 Aron Auspitz
Editors
 Michael J. Duthie
 Additional:
 Peter S. Elliot
Production Designer
 Holger Gross
Art Director
 Nelson Coates
Set Decorator
 Alexander L. Carle
Set Dressers
 Victor Bazaz
 Robert Eerelli
 Elizabeth Frank
 Sam F. Huston Jnr
 John T. Melick
On-set:
 Lance Johnson
Conceptual Artist
 Oliver Scholl
Lead Scenic Artist
 Stella R. Kornbacher
Scenic Artists
 Wayne Daddio
 Wayne Stone
 Brett Wert
 Sue O'Connor
 Missy Vivenzio
Stand-by:
 Jon P. Mooers
Storyboard Artist
 Peter Mitchell

Special Effects Supervisor/Designer
 Kit West
Special Effects Foremen:
 Yves DeBono
 Larry Roberts
 Trevor John Wood
Crew:
 Vince Creighton
 Albert C. Jackson
 Alan M. Lessing
 John Marshall
 Alex Perkins
 Mike Riedel
2nd Unit:
 Dave Ambron
 Charles W. Hessey
Models
 Volker Engel
 Wolfgang Hart
 Torsten Kuhn
Music
 Christopher Franke
Music Director
 Brynmor Jones
Music Performed by
 The Berlin Symphonic Film Orchestra
Music Producer
 Richard E. Roth
Music Supervisors
 Harry Shannon
 Robin Glen
Music Editor
 Lisa Kauppi
Songs
 "Body Count's in the House" by Ice-T, Ernie C., performed by The Body Count; "Qua Cau Gio Bay" performed by Bach Yen, Tran Quang Hai; "Goin' Out on the Town Tonight" by John Lombardo, Harry Shannon; "Life's Too Confusin' Anyway", "The Worst Always Happens", "Breakin' Up, Breakin' Down", "Goin' Out on the Town Tonight", "It's Almost Time to Put the Bottle Down", "Waking Up and Walking Out the Door" by Wendy Kramer, Harry Shannon
Costume Design
 Joseph Porro
Costume Supervisors
 Renee Dorion-Foley
 Donn Hook
Wardrobe
 Christi K. Work
Costumers
 Elaine Balboni
 Deanne Smith
 Victoria Wendell
Set:
 Laureen Jacques
Make-up
 Key:
 Zoltan Elek
 Artist:
 N. Kristine Chadwick
2nd Unit:
 Jacqueline Nealy
Special Make-up Effects
 Larry R. Hamlin
 Michael Burnett
Crew:
 Jack Bricker
 Diana Carbajal
 Jake Garber
 Grady Holder
 Carol Jones
 Andrew Kenworthy
 Wendy Polutanovich
 Gregory D. Polutanovich
 Timothy Ralston
 Greg Smith
Title Design
 Wenden K. Baldwin
Titles/Opticals
 Cinema Research

**Corporation
Supervising Sound Editors**

Sandy Gendler
Val Kuklowsky
Sound Editors
Clayton Collins
Joe Gillis
Bill Van Daalen
ADR Editor
Elma Glutz
Foley Editor
Sue Robertson
Sound Recordists
David Chornow
2nd Unit:
Thomas Brandom
ADR Recordist
Jeff Courtie
Foley Recordist
Jack Heeren
Dolby stereo
Consultants:
Bradford L. Hohle
Robert S. Warren
Sound Re-recordists
Patrick Cycone
Don White
David Appleby
Sound Effects Design
John Paul Fasal
Sound Effects
Ken J. Johnson
Foley Artist
Andy Malcolm
Project Consultant
Linda Seger
Production Assistants
Marc Roskin
Greg T. Smith
Key Set:
Jeff Crawford
Set:
Brandon Lambdin
Lars Winther
2nd Unit:
Karen O'Toole
Office:
Gregory Jacobs
Mitchell C. Mays
Jim Sgrignoli
Stunt Co-ordinator
Vic Armstrong
Stunts
Andy Armstrong
Gary Baxley
Richard Butler
Jack Carpenter
Clarke Coleman
B.J. Davis
Vincent F. Deadrick
Rick Deming
Dana Dru Evenson
Steve Geray
Voyo Goric
Hubie Kerns Jnr
Kevin LaRosa
Stuart Liebeskind
Billy D. Lucas
Peter Malota
Denver Mattson
Robert Orrison
Diane Peterson
Richard Piemonte
Jon Conrad
Pochron
Bill M. Ryusaki
Steve Vandeman
Michael Vendrell
Ric Roman Waugh
Gerard Williams
Raleigh Wilson
Stunt Doubles
Jean-Claude Van Damme
Mark Stefanich
Dolph Lundgren
Jeff Jensen
Ally Walker:
Donna Evans
Aerial Co-ordinator
Kevin LaRosa
Helicopter Pilots
Kevin LaRosa
Steve Geray
Pilots
Robbie Hollins
Floyd Goodat

Cast
Jean-Claude Van Damme
Luc Devreux
Dolph Lundgren
Andrew Scott
Ally Walker
Veronica Roberts
Ed O'Ross
Colonel Perry

Jerry Orbach
Dr Gregor
Leon Rippy
Woodward
Tico Wells
Garth
Ralph Moeller
GR76
Robert Trebor
Motel Owner
Gene Davis
Lieutenant
Drew Synder
Charles
"Tiny" Lister Jnr
GR55
Simon Rhee
GR61
Eric Norris
GR86
Michael Winther
Technician
Joseph Malone
Huey
Rance Howard
Mr Devreux
Lilyan Chauvin
Mrs Devreux
Monty Laird
Attendant
Joanne Baron
Waitress
Lupe Ontiveros
Maid
Jack Moore
Witzzy
John Storey
Clark
Bradford Bancroft
Powell
Thomas Rosales
Wagner
Trini Tran
Vietnamese Girl
Tai Thai
Vietnamese Boy
Rachel Wagner
Girl in Motel
Brandon Lambdin
Boy in Motel
Ned Bellamy
FBI Agent
Paul Raczkowski
Briefing Officer
Daniel Demorest
Radio Operator
Tanner Gill
Masked Gunman
Eddie Braun
Walter R. Robles
Snipers
Jophery Brown
Thug
Dona Hardy
Old Woman
Leon Delaney
George Fisher
Patrolmen
Dave Efron
Myron L. Lapka
David DiGregorio
Rhino Michaels
Truckers
R.D. Carpenter
Duane Davis
Shane Dixon
Joel Kramer
Rodd Wolff
Policemen
Leilani Jones
Mike Rausoe
Stephen Wolfe Smith
Reporters at Hoover
Dam
Tom Taglang
Michael Jai White
Soldiers
John Anthony D'Angelo
Roger B. Ellsworth
Matt Thomas
Miron E. Willis
Sharpshooters
Alan Wyatt Jnr
Local
Allan Graf
Cook
Kamel Krifa
H.T.
John DeMita
Jill Jares
TV News Crew
9,281 feet
103 minutes

● Vietnam, 1969: Luc Devreux refuses an order from his psychotic comrade Sergeant Andrew Scott to slay an innocent Vietnamese boy and girl. When Scott carries out the execution himself, a struggle ensues during which Scott and Devreux kill each other. Later, their bodies are packed in ice and returned to the US. The Nevada Desert, the present day: A prototype, elite military unit, known as the Universal Soldiers, foils the hijacking of a major power station, their third successful mission; amongst the team are Scott and Devreux, resurrected by a new drug and now answering to the codenames GR13 and GR44 respectively.

Reprogrammed as mercenary automatons, both soldiers are beginning to experience memory flashes from their final conflict in Vietnam. Having been fired from her job for tardiness, CNA TV news reporter Veronica Roberts infiltrates the 'Unisol' mobile base with a cameraman, and discovers a wounded member of the team packed in ice. When GR13 slays the cameraman, GR44 instinctively leaps to Veronica's defence, driving her to a motel in Ash Fork, Arizona, where they are pursued by the now renegade GR13. Suffering from over-heating caused by the administration of the revitalising drug, GR44 is given an ice-bath by Veronica, who observes a recent wound heal instantaneously.

Discovered by GR13, the pair flee once more, and Veronica gouges an implanted tracking device from GR44's leg. Desperate to understand his past, GR44 returns to Unisol control and steals files relating to his case. When news arrives that the Unisol project has been cancelled, GR13 (who has now reverted permanently to his original identity as Andrew Scott) kills project leader Colonel Perry, mainlines muscle-enhancing drugs, and takes control of the mobile Unisol base. Using the pilfered files, Veronica traces Dr Gregor, originator of the Unisol project, who explains that GR13 and GR44 are experiencing "Aggressive Traumatic Recall"; GR44 wants only to return home, while GR13 is still fighting a jungle war.

GR44 and Veronica are arrested by police, but their prison van is pushed from the road by GR13 and the couple narrowly escape a fatal cliff-top plunge. Commandeering a police car, Veronica and GR44 travel to Meraux, Louisiana, where GR44 is reunited with his parents, but GR13 follows. Reliving his last moments in Vietnam, GR13 binds Veronica and demands that GR44 execute her. As Veronica escapes, GR13 stops her with a grenade, but is finally overwhelmed by GR44, who injects himself with muscle-enhancing drugs. Veronica emerges unharmed from the wreckage, as GR13 springs to life once again, before being finally pushed into a mincer and exterminated.

● Described by director Roland Emmerich as "a modern retelling of the classic Frankenstein



Alien at home: Jean-Claude Van Damme

myth", this efficient and inventive sci-fi fantasy is more revealing of a behind-the-scenes battle for supremacy. While Dolph Lundgren seemed for many years set to succeed Stallone and Schwarzenegger as king of the movie musclemen, his star is now apparently waning in favour of relative newcomer Jean-Claude Van Damme. As witness Arnold Schwarzenegger, all screen musclemen face a crisis point in their careers when they must either broaden their appeal with 'sympathetic' (perhaps even comic) roles, or resign themselves to a future working within the most limited of action genres. Since Lundgren has made spirited attempts in recent years to expand his repertoire with good-humoured roles in such films as *Dark Angel* and the jokey thriller *Showdown in Little Tokyo*, his casting here as a psychotic cyborg foil to Van Damme's confused but passionate hero seems to be a major step backwards.

Van Damme meanwhile continues to grow in popularity despite the potential impediment of his incontrovertibly foreign accent, a classic 'Hollywood handicap' which Lundgren ironically spent hours in speech therapy to overcome. Cast here as a native of the Louisiana swamps, Van Damme has landed a choice role (originally developed for Stallone) which allows him to be at once fierce but friendly, aggressive but sympathetic, and (crucially) foreign but home-grown. Plundering such popular sci-fi source material as *RoboCop*, and relying heavily on the well-worn image of the Vietnam War as the root of modern (anti-heroic) psychosis, *Universal Soldier* has hardly an original idea to its name. Yet Emmerich's muscular direction, combined with stunt co-ordinator Vic Armstrong's flair for explosive action sequences, elevate this to a classy rollercoaster ride through the clichés of modern fantasy cinema. Like the Universal Soldiers themselves, Emmerich's film may be made of reconstituted flesh, but it still looks fabulous and runs like a well-oiled and unstoppable machine.

Mark Kermode

Waterland

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Stephen Gyllenhaal

Certificate
15
Distributor
Mayfair Entertainment
Production Company
Palace Pictures
In association with
Pandora Cinema/
Channel 4 Films
With the participation
of British Screen
Executive Producers
Nik Powell
Stephen Woolley
Ira Deutchman
Producers
Katy McGuinness
Patrick Cassavetti
Production Co-ordinators
Mairi Bett
Additional:
Bi Benton
US:
Georgia Kacandes
Production Manager
Donna Grey
Unit Production Manager
US:
Victoria Westhead
Location Managers
Sue Quinn
US:
Jane Barrer
Casting
UK:
Susie Figgis
US:
Deborah Aquila
Additional:
Polly Hootkins
Pittsburgh:
Donna Belajac
Extras:
Stack Blagovich
Assistant Directors
David Brown
Peter Heslop
Christian Abomnes
Steve Robinson
US:
Cyd Adams
Margie Sperling
Screenplay
Peter Prince
Based on the novel
by Graham Swift
Director of Photography
Robert Elswit
Scope
In colour
Underwater Photography
Mike Valentine
Editor
Lesley Walker
Production Designer
Hugo Luczye-Whyowski
Art Director
Helen Rayner
Scenic Artist
US:
Paul Bucciarelli
Special Effects
First FX
Music
Carter Burwell
Music Supervisor
Peter Afterman
Music Editor
Kevin Lane
Song
"Picture of Your
Daddy" by Mark
Fosson, performed
by Karen Tobin
Costume Design
Lindy Hemming
Wardrobe Supervisors
Anthony Black
Stuart Meachem
US:
Elizabeth Feldbauer
Make-up Artists
Linda Devetta
Louise Fisher
Norma Hill
Titles
Cine Image
Opticals Ltd

Sound Editors
Peter Pennell
Dialogue:
Alan Paley
Foley Editor
Peter Holt
Sound Recordists
Simon Okin
ADR:
John Bateman
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordist
Robin O'Donoghue
Foley Artists
Pauline Griffiths
Jenny Lee Wright
Production Assistants
Office:
Jennifer Gold
Set:
Robert Bress
Amy Hughes
Gabrielle Geier
Shari L. Stocker
Additional:
John Shine
Shawn Vashaw
Lance Weller
Craft Service:
Colleen Pallitto
Stunt Double
Graham Crowther
Stand-in
Jeremy Irons:
Brian Hope
Cast
Jeremy Irons
Tom Crick
Sinead Cusack
Mary Crick
Ethan Hawke
Mathew Price
Grant Warnock
Young Tom
Lena Headey
Young Mary
David Morrissey
Dick Crick
John Heard
Lewis Scott
Callum Dixon
Freddie Parr
Sean McGuire
Peter
Ross McCall
Terry
Camilla Hedditch
Shirley
Maggie Gyllenhaal
Maggie Ruth
Cara Buono
Judy Dobson
Peter Postlethwaite
Henry Crick
Stewart Richman
Ernest Atkinson
Siri Neal
Helen Atkinson
Gareth Thomas
Publican
Susanah Fellows
Rebecca Scott
Colin Bruce
Kate Harper
Bradley Lavelle
Jana Sheldon
Guests at Dinner Party
Alesh Hlozek
Kimberley Lakey
Tessa Wilkins
Scott Children
Tony Vogel
Stan Booth
Paul Haigh
Giles Thomas
RAF Men
Larry John Meyers
Senior Police Officer
Tina Benko
Baby's Mother
Rohn Thomas
Barman
Matyelok Gibbs
Martha Clay
Joylon Stephenson
Jerry

Nicholas Boyce
Leroy
Miguel Montalvo
Stephen Bates
Alison Evers
Alison
Latoya Heard
Julie
Kalvin Palmer
Marshall
Jennifer Meyer
Sara
Christine Christie
Angie
Vanessa Pfluger
Vanessa

Joe Collis
Paul Hardy
Eric Dumbaugh
Boys
Monique Idlebird
Hasmin Stremikis
Girls
Stephanie Anderson
Fernando Cassas
Jeff Hoffman
Michael Hunter
Anne Kilpack
Sara Ittmann
Nadia Siraj
Josh Wheaton
Other Pupils

8,528 feet
95 minutes

Pittsburgh, 1974: English history teacher Tom Crick finds himself assailed on two fronts: his pupils, young Mathew Price in particular, question the usefulness of his lessons at a time when history may be about to end, and his wife Mary seems to be slipping away into fantasies about the child they cannot have and which God will give to her. After returning home one day to a particularly shocking discovery, Tom begins teaching a different sort of history, the story of his own boyhood, during the war, in the Fenland of East Anglia, with his widowed father Henry, a lock-gate keeper on the River Leem, and his mentally handicapped brother Dick (a "potato head" in Fen parlance)...

He tells of his love for Mary Metcalf, of their sexual explorations on the train to and from school, and how Mary was fascinated by the physically well-endowed Dick, whose sexual education she also undertook. When some of his pupils protest at these stories, Tom takes them further into his past, to the time when his maternal grandfather Ernest Atkinson was a prosperous brewer, but was out of sympathy with the jingoistic fervour of the early years of the century. For George V's coronation, he concocted an especially potent brew, and during the subsequent drunken riots his brewery was burnt down. He retreated to the family estate with his daughter Helen, his only child – though Tom mentions one surviving case of the 'Coronation Ale' being handed down to a 'son'.

Tom's unorthodox lessons irritate the school's headmaster, Lewis Scott, who intimates that it may be time for Tom to leave, and for history to be eliminated from the curriculum. Tom tells his students how his grandfather eventually turned his manor house into a nursing home for the physical and mental casualties of the First World War; Helen – though her life was otherwise totally devoted to her father – became a nurse in the home, where she met Henry Crick. After their marriage, Ernest Atkinson bequeathed a trunk containing the last case of ale and a letter of explanation to their first-born, Dick. During the Second World War, Tom's relationship with Mary culminates in her becoming pregnant, although to avoid hurting Dick, she claims that the father is one of their friends, Freddie Parr.

Freddie's body is later found floating in the lock, and Tom and Mary realise that Dick first got him drunk on

the ale and then drowned him. Dick forces Tom to read the letter from their grandfather, which reveals that Dick was incestuously conceived by Ernest and Helen Atkinson. The grief-stricken Dick drowns himself. In the present, Tom is left by Mary: the shocking discovery he had made was that she had stolen a baby outside a supermarket, which he forced her to return. The last story he tells his class is how her wartime pregnancy was terminated by an old woman of the Fens, which left her sterile. Tom makes a farewell speech to the school – revealing how the horrors he saw in Germany after the war forced him to think of them, and the events of his own life, as history – then returns to the Fens for a possible reunion with Mary.

Waterland, like *Paris Trout*, is the work of a director with a strong sense of place, a sure visual imagination, and an exciting way with both actors and narratives whose momentum is provided by wholly internal forces. What Stephen Gyllenhaal hasn't yet developed is a theme, a way of shaping rather than staging his dramas that will make them more than the sum of their case histories. Madness might be his theme, or the logic with which a skewed sense of reality grows ever more aberrant in isolated circumstances. But in both films, the theme weakens as the symptoms proliferate, and our attention is tugged this way and that by all the fascinating detail with which Gyllenhaal can show just how mad yet functional these individuals, and their societies, are.

It is, to begin with, an encouraging sign of directorial presence, and slightly discouraging at other levels, that Pete Dexter's small-town late-40s Georgia and Graham Swift's wartime East Anglian Fenlands merge so easily in Gyllenhaal's canon. Both fit the scenario of the inbred world apart, of sexual and psychological deviance that imposes its own normality, and both – despite being socially quite specific and

well-observed – become quickly and timelessly Gothic. *Waterland* pushes this closer to bathos, because it's set not in one enclosed time and place but three, and so its catalogue of disasters is soon piling up alarmingly: Tom Crick and the wife "slipping away" from him in the framing (70s) scenes; adolescent love, murder and abortion in the wartime years; and the retreat into madness and incest in the more distant past.

Interestingly enough, what Gyllenhaal has tackled in both cases are novels which he adapts with great skill at the dramatic level, but which present apparently insuperable problems of perspective, of narrative voice. In *Paris Trout*, his (and the novelist's) solution was to supply a narrator, a teller within the tale who never quite managed to convince us that it was hers to tell. The problem is the reverse in *Waterland*: how to wrench the tale away from its omnipresent narrator, history teacher and amateur lecturer on a sprawling diversity of matters in the human and natural world, Tom Crick.

Though it takes in as much melodrama as the film (perhaps more), Swift's novel in a way remains outside it, as if its true subject, or theme, was always moving on a different, parallel track. It is contained in Crick's ceaselessly flowing lecture, which even includes the storytelling impulse as part of its subject, but takes as a starting point the Fens, the physical peculiarities of the landscape and their metaphysical dimension ("And what are the Fens, which so imitate in their levelness the natural disposition of water, but a landscape which, of all landscapes, most approximates to Nothing...every Fenman suffers now and then the illusion that the land he walks over is *not there*, is floating...").

This will lead him, after a consideration of his personal and family history, the French Revolution and the course of human history, even the reproductive mysteries of the European Eel, to reassure one of his students: 'The feel-

ing's not new. Saxon hermits felt it. They felt it when they built the pyramids to try to prove it wasn't true. My father felt it in the mud at Ypres. My grandfather felt it and drowned it with suicidal beer. Mary felt it... It's the old, old feeling, that everything might amount to nothing'. For all its melodrama, the central conflict of *Waterland* is between Crick's need to talk about history – his own, anyone's, everyone's – and the student he is trying to reassure, Price, the classroom rebel who dismisses history as irrelevant to a generation whose major fear is that history is about to end in a nuclear bang.

It's not a particularly strong or convincing conflict – though Swift can hardly be blamed for recent events that have made it even less likely that teenagers are kept awake by the prospect of Nuclear Armageddon. The film has taken over that classroom conflict but shifted it, curiously, to Pittsburgh – for US box-office reasons, presumably, but still curious, because although Gyllenhaal quite nicely captures the city, he makes no point of it as an industrial successor (decaying into Nothing?) to the primordial Fens.

When Swift's *Waterland* first appeared, its evocation of the Fenland was compared to Hardy's Wessex or Dickens' London; its whole saga to the nineteenth-century novel's obsession with family and business matters. Its real place, however, might be in another tradition, the doomed, absurdist view of human nature that stretches from Laurence Sterne to John Irving, from *Tristram Shandy* to *The Hotel New Hampshire*, in which characters are quite static, fate's benumbed playthings, and the real characters are the author's opinions about Life and How It Works, black-comic attitudes which it is the business of the plot to exemplify over and over. Gyllenhaal's *Waterland* strips this down and gives us a neat, bustling resumé of the nineteenth-century saga those reviews were talking about.

Richard Combs



Matters human and natural: Lena Headey, Grant Warnock

White Sands

USA 1992

Director: Roger Donaldson

Certificate
15

Distributor
Warner Bros

Production Company
Morgan Creek Productions

Executive Producers
James G. Robinson
Gary Barber
David Nicksay

Producers
William Sackheim
Scott Rudin

Associate Producer
David Wisniewitz

Production Controller
Todd P. Smith

Production Co-ordinator
Charlie Johnson-O'Dowd

Unit Production Manager
David Wisniewitz

Location Manager
Michael Dellheim

Post-production Supervisor
Jody Levin

Casting
David Rubin

Associate:
Debbie Zane

Location:
Sally Jackson

Assistant Directors
Joel Segal
Greg Babcock
Dirk Craft

Screenplay
Daniel Pyne

Director of Photography
Peter Menzies Jnr
In colour

Aerial Photography
David Nowell

Ron Goodman

Camera Operators
Peter Menzies Jnr
James Muro

Steadicam Operator
James Muro

Video Playback Operators
Cass Donaldson

24 Frame:
Vic Anderbury

Editor
Nicholas Beauman

Associate:
Sue Blainey

Production Designer
John Graysmark

Art Director
Michael Rizzo

Art Department Co-ordinator
Catherine Butler

Set Decorator
Michael Seirton

Set Dresser
Peter Stephenson

Production Illustrator
Brick Mason

Head Scenic Artist
Ed Vega

Scenic Artist
Terry Weldon

Special Effects Co-ordinator
Kelly Kerby

Special Effects Technicians
Joe Heffernan
Randy Johnson

Music
Patrick O'Hearn

Music Performed by
Keyboards/Bass:
Electronic Percussion:
Patrick O'Hearn
Drums/Percussion:
Terry Bozzio
Guitar:
Warren Cuccurullo

Music Editor
Jim Harrison

Music Researcher
Chrissie Wilson

Songs
"Devils Lake",
"Sacred Heart" by and
performed by Patrick
O'Hearn; "Quicksand
and Lies" by Bill Payne,
Craig Fuller, performed
by Little Feat; "The
Heart that You Own"
by and performed
by Dwight Yoakam;
"Theresa" by Jimmie
Wood, Jimmy King,
performed by Jimmie
Wood & the Immortals

Costume Design
Deborah Evertson

Costume Supervisor
Jessica Fasman

Costumers
Men:
Hans Struhar
Women:
Laurel Frushour

Make-up Artists
Deborah Larsen
Mickey Rourke:
Ed Terns

Special Effects Make-up
Michael McCormick

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editor
Michael Hilkene

Sound Editors
Jeremy J. Gordon
Victor B. Lakey
Eric W. Lindemann
Mark Rathaus

Sound Recordists
Richard Goodman

Music:
Steve Krause
Tom Biner

ADR Recordist
Jeff Courtie

Foley Recordist
James Ashwill
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists
Paul Massey
Don Digirolamo
Robert Glass

Sound Effects Co-ordinator
Randall Guth

Foley Walkers
Kevin Bartnoff
Heilda Hodges

Production Assistants
Steven Banks
Denise Denver
Anita Eades
Marsha Langley-Reed
Michelle Minyon
Myles Reed
Eric Rivera
Kate Santore
Ross Segal
Joe Stargensky
Wade Stevens
Mike Thompson
Donna Wells

Stunt Co-ordinator
Steve Boyum

Stunts
Dick Ziker
Tom Huff
Tony Epper
Bennie Moore
Steve Chambers
J.N. Roberts
William Washington
Vickie Tyer
Linda Scholtz
Jess Franks
Gilbert J. Anderson
Maria Barry
William P. Bennet
Tom Berto
Tom Byrd
Tim Carroll
Steven Dismuke
Frank Fierro
Cory Gardner
Rusty Hamilton
Steve Hanna
Kent Mahoney
Rebecca Mahoney
Mike Ray
Gilbert Ulibarry
Russell Wallraven
Richard Slaughter

Stand-ins
Geffre Hurt

Tish Meyers
Darren L. Scott

Head Wrangler
Tim Carroll

Wrangler
Tom Byrd

Pilots
Chuck Tamburro
Cliff Fleming
Don Ambabo
Rick Morrow

Cast
Willem Dafoe
Ray Dolezal
Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio
Lane Bodine
Mickey Rourke
Gorman Lennox
Sam Jackson
Greg Meeker
M. Emmet Walsh
Bert Gibson
Mimi Rogers
Molly Dolezal
James Rebhorn
Flynn
Maura Tierney
Noreen
Beth Grant
Roz
Alexander Nicksay
Ben
Fredrick Lopez
Delmar Blackwater
Miguel Sandoval
Ruiz
John Lafayette
Demott
Ken Thorley
Kleinman
Jack Kehler
Casanov
Royce D. Applegate
Peterson
Megan Butler
Goodman
Lisa Cloud
Redhead
Steve Cormier
Artie O'Brien
Steven Tyler
Blond FBI Agent
John David Garfield
FBI Agent
William P. Bennet
Rodeo Clown
Tom Conner
La Fonda Desk Clerk
Joy Bouton
Sue
Meredith Marshall
Rodeo Singer
Doc Phillips
Rodeo Announcer
Ben Zeller
Drifter
Karen Breeding
Cowgirl

9,101 feet
101 minutes

When a body, an apparent suicide, is discovered in the middle of the New Mexico desert, local deputy sheriff Ray Dolezal is puzzled by the man's lack of ID, and by the fact that his briefcase contains half-a-million dollars. A carpet thread leads Dolezal and medical examiner Bert Gibson to the motel where the man, Spencer, was staying, and a piece of wax paper is found in the contents of his stomach with a name, Noreen, and a telephone number. Dolezal rings the number pretending to be Spencer, and is berated by a woman for not contacting her sooner and told to be at a certain motel the following day with the money. Dolezal decides to follow up the case – much to the distress of his wife Molly – and at the motel two armed women take the money and tell him that he must meet up with a man named Lennox in Sante Fe.

Dolezal is then picked up by two men who turn out to be FBI agents, and at their headquarters in Albuquerque, he is told by agent Greg Meeker that Spencer was an undercover agent and that they are trying to bust Lennox for arms-dealing. Dolezal undertakes to substitute for Spencer in order to recover the money and keeps the appointment with Lennox. They are trailed by two men whom Dolezal later discovers are working for the FBI's Internal Affairs and who were investigating Spencer. Lennox introduces Dolezal to Lane, the woman he originally spoke to on the phone, who is the broker in the venture between Spencer and Lennox. She later tells Dolezal that she knows he is not Spencer, but is willing to play along so that the deal goes through and she gets her cut.

Lennox takes Dolezal to an abandoned air base where they are to complete a deal to buy black-market military hardware. The dealers, however, ask for more than originally agreed, and Dolezal agrees to find an extra \$25,000. Back at the hotel, he discovers that a woman called Noreen has been looking for Spencer. Lane is happy to provide the extra money, but on condition that Dolezal stay at her mansion; but he rejects her when she makes a pass at him. Dolezal, Lennox and Lane attend a rodeo, where Noreen puts out a call for Spencer. She tells Dolezal that Spencer was involved in a scam with another FBI agent. Before she can reveal his identity, Dolezal is dragged off by the Internal Affairs agents. He manages to escape but Noreen has now been killed; Dolezal finds a picture of Spencer and her with Meeker.

Dolezal reveals to Lane that he is a police officer. He then approaches Meeker who admits that he drove Spencer to suicide, but also that he is out on a limb with the Lennox case. Meanwhile, Lennox has taken the Internal Affairs officers captive, and later shoots them in front of Dolezal. He explains that he is with the CIA and knows about Meeker's scams. Lennox then takes Lane hostage and demands the return of his money. Dolezal arranges to meet Meeker at the air base, and leaves him chained up with

the briefcase containing the money after calling Internal Affairs. When Lennox arrives, he is shot by Meeker who manages to get away. Internal Affairs officers arrive to find a suitcase full of money in Lennox's car. Meeker meanwhile finds that his case is full of sand. Dolezal returns her share of the money to Lane, but turns down her invitation to stay with her.

With a plot as meandering as a desert ravine that boasts a score of little rivulets leading nowhere and many treacherous pitfalls, *White Sands* proves to be hard work to follow. So much is crammed into the somewhat incredible, sub-Hitchcock storyline, courtesy of Daniel Pyne (who also penned *Pacific Heights*), that it doesn't all add up and becomes a case of not being able to see the desert for the grains of sand. Once the site of Cold War nuclear testing, New Mexico is here the parched and desolate but adobe-chic setting for a post-Cold War sprawling conspiracy thriller in which it is the man from the CIA's job to "create enemies when there aren't any".

The brute in a silk suit (Mickey Rourke in familiar form as the debonair maniac) buys the glossiest military hardware to keep the 'other side' fighting in all those little skirmishes around the world. His is a perverse global agenda, though at least he's sticking to the task in question, unlike Meeker, the FBI agent who has gone off the tracks and ends up with a caseload of riches that turn to dust (echoes of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*). He explains how, as an Afro-American, he found that he could only go so far in the system, and when he couldn't make further good, he had to go bad. It's a proposition that has uneasy implications. Meanwhile, Lane is the rich and bored adventuress who gives her profits to worthy causes and hires gun-totin', salty-tongued women to do her dirty work (their only scene, in which they intimidate Dolezal in the motel, is one of the film's high spots).

Into this den of thieves bent on prospecting for themselves rides the local sheriff. He may have a sports car instead of a horse, but he does have a ten-gallon white hat perched in saintly fashion on his head. It's a hat that prompts ridicule in a limping gag. But Dolezal proves true to all it stands for: he may face temptation out in the desert, and for a few moments consider the lure of the dashing Lane and ill-gotten lucre, but his reputation is never besmirched. Willem Dafoe plays him as more bemused than cautious, his blue eyes twinkling with eager expectation as the situation takes yet another turn in this desert runabout, while the equally bemused audience flounders close behind. Rourke, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio and Sam Jackson also turn in likeable performances, while M. Emmet Walsh, veteran of many a sweaty thriller, provides a casual cameo as the slobbish, gum-chewing medical examiner.

Lizzie Francke



Dust of the Sierra Madre: Mickey Rourke, Willem Dafoe

Without You I'm Nothing

USA 1990

Director: John Boskovich

Certificate
18
Distributor
Electric Pictures
Production Company
M.C.E.G. Productions
Executive Producer
Nicolas Roeg
Producer
Jonathan D. Krane
Line Producer
Jim Czarnecki
Production Co-ordinator
Deborah Reissman
Production Manager
Krista Montagna
Location Manager
Sam Travolta
Casting
Extras:
Montgomery/Parada
Assistant Directors
Peggy Jacobson
Jeffrey L. Crawford
Screenplay
Sandra Bernhard
John Boskovich
Director of Photography
Joseph Yacoe
Colour
Technicolor
Special Photography
Jake Crain
Camera Operator
Dave Rudd
Editor
Pamela Malouf-Cundy
Production Designer
Kevin Rupnik
Art Director
Kevin Adams
Primary Visual Concepts
Mentor Heubner
Set Decorator
Douglas A. Mowat
Special Effects
Co-ordinator
Jeff Jackson
Special Effects
Jim T. Graham
Music
Patrice Rushen
Music Performed by
Piano/Synthesizer/
Timbales/Percussion:
Patrice Rushen
Drums/Vibes:
Ndugu Chancelier
Bass:
Ken Wild
Dave Stone
Freddie Washington
Guitar:
Phil Upchurch
Ray Fuller
Guitar/Dobro/Flute/
Harmonica/Recorder:
Dan Sawyer
Saxophone:
Fred Jackson
Jeff Clayton
Flute:
Fred Jackson
Percussion:
Ulysses Dupree
Trumpet:
Neil Rosengarden
Harpisichord:
Lincoln Mayorga
Fiddle:
Bruce Dukov
Strings:
Suzie Katayama
Bruce Dukov
Michelle Zivahl-Fox
Cynthia Morrow
Larry Corbett
Joel Derouin
Background Singers:
Carmen Twillie
Clydene Jackson-
Edwards
Patrice Rushen
Morgan Ames
Oren Waters

With
Sandra Bernhard
Herself
John Doe
Himself
Steve Antin
Himself
Lu Leonard
Sandra's Manager
Ken Foree
Emcee
Cynthia Bailey
Roxanne
Grace Broughton
Kimberli Williams
Axel Vera
Estuardo M. Volty
"Female" Back-
up Singers
Kevin Dorsey
Arnold McCuller
Oren Waters
Male Back-up Singers
Vonté Sweet
Tonya Natalie Townsend
Jeff Wiener
Children Carolers
Stephanie Clark
Indrani DeSouza
Hardy Keith
Sebastian Russell
Ellen Sims
Carlton Wilborn
Ballet Dancers
Joe DiGiandomenico
Felix Montano
David Stuart Rodgers
Go-Go Dancers
Paul Thorpe
Apollo
Denise Vlasis
Shoshanna
Djimon Hounsou
Ex-Boyfriend
Roxanne Reese
Ludie C. Washington
Hecklers
Stephanie Albers
Robin Antin
Annie Livingstone
Hippies

Vanessa Burch
Piano Player
Ernie Fields
Saxophone/Flute
Phil Upchurch
Electric Guitar
Ivan Julian
Acoustic Guitar
James Jamerson Jr
Bass
Donnell Spencer
Terri Lyne Carrington
Drums
Ulysses "Nayako" Dupree
Congas/Percussion
Neil Rosengarden
Trumpet
Raymond Brown
Flügelhorn
Mike Johnstone
Pedal Steel/Dobro
Dave McKelvy
Harmonica
Michelle Zivahl-Fox
Fiddle
Greg Brown
Vibes
Mario Feninger
Harpisichord
Suzie Katayama
Cello
Don Ambrosio
Michelle Zivahl-Fox
Violin
Larry Corbett
Bruce Dukov
Viola
Afro Brazil
Drum Ensemble
Lula Almeida
José Bruno Eisenberg
Reyes Rodriguez
Percussionists
Borracha
Murcego
Capoeira (Brazilian
Martial Arts)

8,019 feet
89 minutes



As you like her: Sandra Bernhard

Backstage at a Los Angeles diner club, Sandra Bernhard prepares to take her one-woman show on stage. In the club, musicians, dancers and clientele are all black. Bernhard's singing and soliloquising act is intercut with scenes of Roxanne, a young black girl, going about her daily life. On stage she is joined, variously, by Shoshanna, whose stripper act parodies Madonna, a dope-smoking Master of Ceremonies, her manager, Ingrid Horn, who specialises in snide asides, and actor Steve Antin. Her musical numbers are accompanied by mock-showbiz dances and backdrops.

Bernhard's routine opens with reflections on her mid-60s, Mid-Western, Jewish childhood, and covers such diverse topics as gay sexuality, her black Hollywood hairdresser boyfriend, flying to LA to cheer up a celebrity friend, purchasing a Navajo blanket from the Warhol auction, and ends with an apology to the few remaining audience that she is a "phoney". Her costumes change from African kanga to Diana Ross glitz as she performs songs ranging from the Vegas-style "Me and Mrs Jones" to the Country and Western duet "I'm So Lonely I Could Cry"; she finally appears in a cloak of American flags, which she sheds for the closing bump-and-grind sequence, performed nude to Prince's "Little Red Corvette". Roxanne is the last person to leave the club, pausing to scrawl "Fuck Sandra Bernhard" on the tablecloth before she walks out into the morning sunlight.

The emphatic 'You' in *Without You I'm Nothing* delivers a blast of irony in the film's opening moments, proclaiming an ambivalence characteristic of cult comedienne Sandra Bernhard's performances. A singer without a voice, a monologuist without effect, a satirist without real bite, Bernhard is highly dependent on what audiences make of her. Her brand of story-and-song revolves around a personal history which is all contradiction and mystery, offering possibly fictitious autobiographical details and few clues. One cannot even be sure that the outrageous Bernhard is gay and her 'memories', which promise to delve into the secrets of childhood and sex, prove as revealing as a press release.

Bernhard plays to white, middle-class America, in an atmosphere thick with underground codes and signifiers, media in-jokes, social pandering and droppable brand names. Her target audience makes the explicit use of black culture, as a backdrop to her raving id, the ultimate irony. "My skin is black, my arms are long", she sings in the number which introduces her pseudo-cabaret act. In the course of this act, punctuated with rare glimpses of a real black woman – the silent Roxanne serving here as Bernhard's alter ego – Bernhard takes a black lover, performs black music and generally calls the shots with black cowboys, stagehands, musicians and dancers. Their physical presence on stage with Bernhard merely points up their absence from most of the monologue.

According to Bernhard, the "black

theme" should be seen as her "personal metaphor", but it simply serves to validate her credentials as hip outsider. Real black America needs no introduction to irony. And as critic bell hooks has pointed out, "Black women have no public paying audience for their funny imitations of white girls".

Most of the film's real energy goes into Bernhard's long, rapid monologues about life among "the Gentiles next door", about the world of a "Cosmo girl" and the myths of the nuclear family. The humour of these pieces resides in their fulsome, camp detail. So, too, with the musical numbers, from parody 60s protest to disco and funk. What makes each song funny is the tacky exactitude of the silver tent dress, the marabou slippers, the Afro hairstyles or the flares, all of which, consonant with camp aesthetics, are the point, not merely symbols of it.

Director John Boskovich shapes the film with slick, inventive confidence, supplying a depth and dynamic which Bernhard's schtick could not achieve alone. As with much art which draws on a gay vernacular, one senses righteous anger behind the studied displays. But the twist to Bernhard's performance is that the fury behind her opaque eyes and downturned mouth seems to be powered by the fact that, thus far, real anguish has eluded her. *Without You I'm Nothing* disappoints because, in the end, it aims for nothing more than the spin-off thrills of a transgressive act in which much is suggested but nothing is really said.

Cynthia Rose

Short films

The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia

United Kingdom 1990

Director: Jan Švankmajer

Distributor
BFI
Production Company
BBC TV
In association with
Nomad Films
Executive Producers
Keith Griffiths
Michael Havas
Producer
Jaromír Kallista
Screenplay
Jan Švankmajer
Director of Photography
Svatopluk Malý
In colour
880 feet
10 minutes

A building explodes and crumbles. Bullets pepper a wall bearing a poster of Stalin. A surgeon cuts open a plaster bust of Stalin to reveal innards from which is plucked a smaller bust of Gottwald, the Czech Communist Party leader. The bust is slapped and a baby cries. Documentary footage of crowds cheering is intercut with Gottwald's Stalinist speeches. There is a montage of photos of Gottwald, Party leaders, workers, building construction and then a rope. A pair of hands put on fingerless gloves to make casts of body parts, from which replicas of a heroic worker are produced on an assembly line. At the end, the figures fall off, get up and walk away, only to be promptly hanged, their bodies falling back into the bucket of clay.

Among idealised images of workers and production graphs, a photo of Stalin is torn apart by a devouring skull, as is one of Gottwald. The Dubcek period and 1968: a rolling pin is taken from a drawer; rolling pins, of different sizes, roll down a hill, squashing objects as they go. Bread and Western-type drink appears on tables. Images of Soviet leaders are juxtaposed with athletes, gymnasts and drawings of cruel Sadean orgies. Objects are painted red, blue and white, including Stalin's bust, which is once again cut open. A baby cries.

Made in 1990, after the so-called "Velvet Revolution", Švankmajer's film is subtitled a "work of agit-prop", and as the film-maker admits, it has all the disadvantages of that form. It plays with images culled from the post-war period in Czechoslovakia, beginning with the initial power struggle when the Soviet-supported Gottwald was installed and set about instituting the Stalinist system. In the 1950s, he purged the Party, sending many of his closest friends to the gallows after public show trials, footage of which Švankmajer includes. For those not conversant with this history, and who would not recognise Gottwald – most Western audiences, one would assume – the film will be difficult to follow at times.

However, its main attack is on Stalin

and his system understood largely as one of signs and images. In the BBC television programme which accompanied this film, Švankmajer gave his view that "the battle against Stalinism is yet to come" and will "take place in people's minds". *The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia* is perceived by him as a "kind of catharsis", and perhaps lacks the depth of some of his work. The rich density of the early Mannerist films, and the Gothic surrealism of his middle period, have been replaced recently by more socially aware typologies – footballers (in *Virile Games*) and politicians – which lack the resonance of his marionettes and imaginary beings.

The tiny dolls which emerge from the straw innards of the 'mother-doll' in *Jabberwocky* resonate with the charged emotions of childhood, with infantile cruelty and ritual violence, which Stalin's entrails do not quite conjure for us. Similarly, the rolling-pin sequence is typical of Švankmajer's manipulation of ordinary objects (witness the glass jars in *Jabberwocky*), but their household associations are not enlarged on here. A single remark by Švankmajer in the BBC programme – to the effect that totalitarianism "appeals to the lower instincts" – reverberates through this film without being fully acknowledged. It is an insight which lies at the heart of surrealism itself, and raises the question of the relationship of those instincts to certain forms of twentieth-century artistic practice as well as to malignant political ideologies.

Michael O'Pray

Dreamland Express

United Kingdom 1982

Director: David Anderson

Distributor
BFI
Screenplay
David Anderson
Director of Photography
David Anderson
In colour
Animator
David Anderson
Editor
Tom Priestly
Music
Dirk Campbell
Music Performed by
Dirk Campbell
Laurin Orland Evans
Margaret Daly
Karl Davies
Clare Lumsden
Rosana Waugh
Sound
David Bell
Simon Fraser
Sound Recorder
Simon Fraser

1,311 feet
14 minutes

At night, a boy clambers out of his bed and ventures into a forest where the trees part mysteriously before him. In a clearing, a train stands, as if waiting for the boy, who climbs into the cab and drives off. As the carriages rush by, the silhouetted passengers appear in the shapes and costumes of ages past. The train emerges from the enchanted forest on to a towering viaduct, enters a mountain-side tunnel and arrives at a city, where people scurry around and board the train. It then ascends into the heavens through whirling geometrical shapes and past a seated godlike figure, before returning to earth to disgorge its passengers, muttering and discontented, on to the track. The train continues on its journey under an ever-changing sky of swiftly moving clouds

and reaches its final destination in a huge circus tent in the middle of a barren plain. Inside the tent, the boy descends in the dress of a ringmaster and the passengers, now animals, march tail-to-tail. The procession, led by the lion, stops in front of the boy then fades away, leaving the boy alone in the wilderness. Back in the boy's bedroom, his empty bed awaits him.

David Anderson made the BAFTA award-winning *Dreamland Express* at the National Film and Television School in 1982. Since then, he has continued to make work using xerography, drawing, cut-out, model and traditional cel animation. Sadly, most viewers will be more likely to have seen his Bank of Scotland advertisement rather than his films *Dreamless Sleep*, *Deadsy* or *Door*. Animated films like *Dreamland Express*, without dialogue or characterisation, derive their effectiveness from what is shown rather than what is said, and no synopsis, including the above, can adequately capture what the film is 'about'. From a relatively commonplace story, Anderson has created a film whose closest mainstream equivalent is *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* or 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, a film of wonder about the universe.

Anderson's universe is the dream, a subject which is peculiarly suited to the animator's art in which the key element is transformation, a common link with dreams and one which clearly has surrealist potential. Mainstream cinema has often tried to depict dreams, and although individual dream sequences can be both effective and memorable, as in Agnes de Mille's stylised ballet from Zinnemann's *Oklahoma!* or the Dali dream sequence from *Spellbound*, they rarely, if ever, achieve the look and feel of a dream.

Anderson's mixed techniques, which are matched by Dirk Campbell's music in their variety, are used to create layers of visual and aural richness, to suggest levels of meaning which go beyond the narrative simplicity. The story itself, though, is the stuff of dreams – every boy's wish to become a train driver – and various episodes, for instance the flying sequences or the appearance of the godhead/lion, can be satisfyingly interpreted within the language of dreams. Sexual metaphors – more dream symbols – also abound, most dramatically when the train flies out of the mountainside built of grotesque human faces, mouths agape, in a whoosh of liquid – a consummate visual representation of oral penetration and orgasm.

Dreamland Express works least well in the city sequences where the straightforward environmental critique of urban darkness is less threatening than the more imaginative flights of fancy. The ambiguity of the empty bed in the final scene leaves a note of perplexity which prevents either full narrative or emotional closure. But otherwise, *Dreamland Express* is a perfect little piece of cinema.

Jill McGreal

Johann Sebastian Bach: Fantasia g moll

(J.S. Bach Fantasia)

Czechoslovakia 1965

Director: Jan Švankmajer

Distributor
BFI
Production Company
Krátký Film
Producer
Zdeněk Novák
Screenplay
Jan Švankmajer
Director of Photography
Svatopluk Malý
In colour
Editor
Milada Šádková
Production Designer
Jan Švankmajer

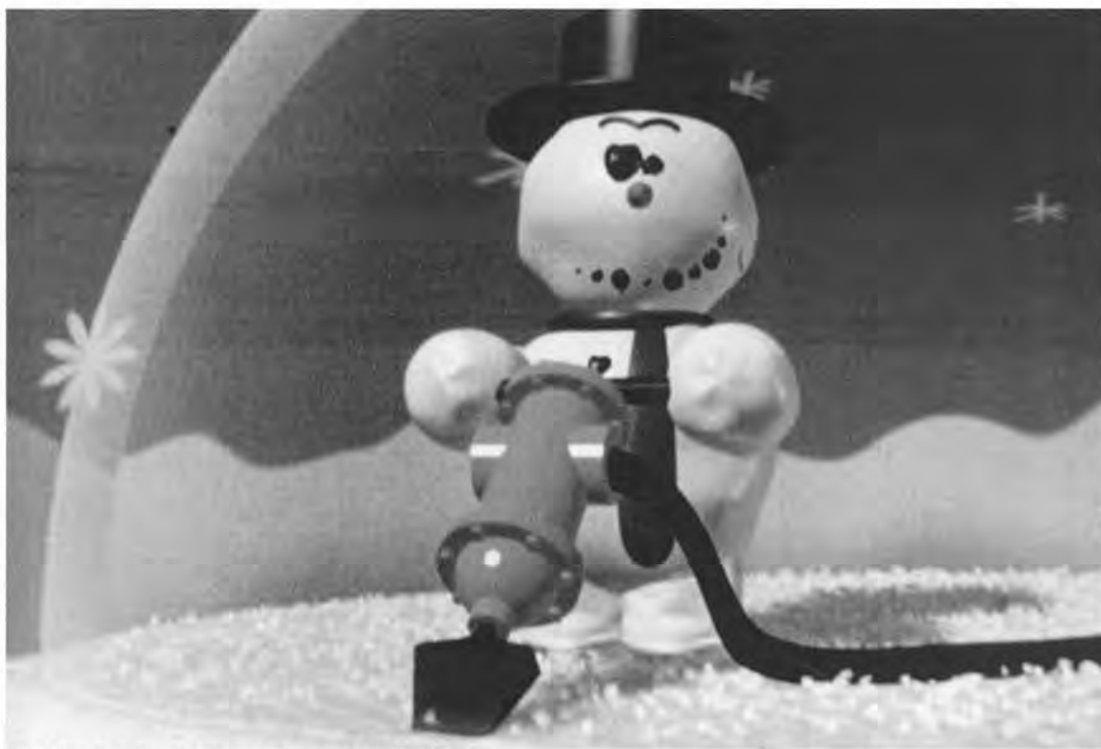
881 feet
10 minutes

A man enters a large old house and climbs the stairs. He unlocks a door, takes off his hat and coat to reveal evening dress, and sits at an organ. He takes an apple from it and puts it in his mouth as he hits the keys with both hands. The music begins and images follow of dilapidated walls in which holes sometimes grow larger, and at other times disappear. Rusty locks and keys are seen, small string-and-stone sculptures hanging from the wall, gates and wire-meshed windows and old wooden doors. A tap on a wall and an old city are seen through barred windows. Holes appear in walls; more sculptures and then nails, old boxes and a series of vertical cracks along a wall. Doors of different kinds open and close in rapid succession. There is a long passageway, more walls and a glimpse of street and sky; a series of pairs of windows, two of which are blocked and the final pair blank.

Johann Sebastian Bach was only Jan Švankmajer's second film, yet it quite unmistakably and forcefully reveals his talent. Certain characteristic themes and tactics are already apparent: the surrealist obsession with lists and categories, and more individually, his love of stone (A Game with Stones was made in the same year, 1965). It might be perverse to associate this approach with that of Ruskin or Stokes, but like Švankmajer these two aesthetes regarded stone as having a central place within a human sensibility. But where Stokes and Ruskin delighted primarily in the beauty of marble in its home, the Mediterranean, Švankmajer's attitude is profoundly East European.

In *Bach*, stone is decaying, peeling, cracking, fissuring, opening out in mysterious and always highly textured ways. The literary equivalent of the effect is found in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher", which Švankmajer filmed in 1981, where the stone walls emotionally embody the past, present and future. For Švankmajer, too, stone is steeped in and a purveyor of memory, emotion, and inevitably history itself, as if humanism (and Švankmajer is essentially humanist) was only possible now in the ruins of tradition and culture.

Bach is one of Švankmajer's most elegant and formal works, in its overwrought style of rhythmic pans and zooms and in its surrealist-derived series (pairs of windows, sets of doors, different locks and keys, and so forth). But it is also a singularly imaginative



'Knick Knack': putting the character in computer animation

treatment of Bach's music, replacing the normally regal and religious imagery, the architectural splendour, with a rampant materiality and fragmentation. The formal intricacy and almost mathematical purity of Bach's piece is counterpointed with a visual language which accentuates reality, seriality and the transformation of these elements by filmic structure and process (pans, edits, tracking shots and zooms). Thus the dignity and imagination of Bach's music, for Švankmajer, is less a matter of Baroque style than a living force which is a source of joy, wonder and humanist aspiration.

Michael O'Pray

Knick Knack

USA 1989

Director: John Lasseter

Distributor	Tony Apodaca
BFI	Deirdre Warin
Production Company	Colour
Pixar	Renderman
Production Staff	Music
John Lasseter	Bobby McFerrin
Eben Ostby	Sound
William Reeves	Gary Rydstrom
Ralph Guggenheim	Dolby stereo
Craig Good	342 feet
Don Conway	4 minutes
Flip Phillips	
Yael Miló	

A shelf is cluttered with tacky souvenir knick knacks – a flamingo from Florida, a Pyramid from Egypt, a skeleton surfer from Death Valley. Among them is a keepsake from Miami, a sexy poolside beauty. Along the shelf, apart from the others, is a snowstorm in a glass bubble, a souvenir from Alaska containing a frosty-looking snowman. When Miss Miami waves to him, the snowman makes strenuous efforts to escape from his bubble into her arms.

He tries various methods, first pounding the glass with his igloo, hammering it with his carrot-nose,

and then in ever-increasing frustration, using a pneumatic drill, oxyacetylene and, finally, dynamite. The blast from this last explosion shakes the bubble so violently that it falls from the shelf. On the way down, the snowman notices an emergency exit door just in time to leap through it to freedom, only to fall straight into a goldfish bowl. But he then discovers that the beautiful Miss Atlantis is in the bowl with him. Maybe life won't be so bad down here after all.

Except, of course, that the bubble is still on its way down. It splashes into the bowl and falls over the hapless snowman who is once more imprisoned, unable to reach his heart's desire.

John Lasseter is the man who first brought character to computer animation. More than any other individual, he is responsible for breathing life into what had previously been a medium controlled by technicians and programmers. Although there were some early experiments in the 60s and 70s, the history of computer modelling and animation only really stretches back over the past decade, and disappointingly work of this kind has been more often associated with television titles and logos than with film-making. *Knick Knack* is a charming and unsophisticated example of what can be achieved when computers are put to work more creatively.

Knick Knack was the final film in a series of five annual shorts made by Lasseter for the Californian computer company Pixar which he joined from Disney in 1984. Although all these films stand in their own right as some of the finest examples of computer animation ever produced, they were actually funded as technical test pieces. Since 1989, work at Pixar has given way to the production of commercials and

to the current creation of a full-length feature film for Disney.

Lasseter has said that the first four films he made at Pixar aimed to test aspects of the technology, culminating in *Tin Toy* – the extraordinarily ambitious piece of photorealistic animation that won him the Oscar in 1989. By contrast, *Knick Knack* was made in a spirit of fun, the only technical innovation being its original 3D format.

More than anything, *Knick Knack* is a homage to Tex Avery and Chuck Jones, featuring the kind of pace and humour that few animators have since equalled. The fact that it was generated on a computer is incidental to the quality of the animation, the comic timing and the storytelling. Indeed, the high-tech production methods are in total contrast to the old-fashioned story of male desire and the accompanying low-tech vocal soundtrack – especially recorded by Bobby McFerrin on top form. The easygoing musical style set against the frantic action is crucial to the successful pacing of the film. The technology provides a new modelling medium – but the medium is certainly not the message.

Bob Swain

Nyebiliti (Time Out)

USSR 1985

Director: Prit Pjarn

Distributor	Eda Mikker
BFI	Yulle Metsur
Producer	Ebellea Piparinen
Hille Koosk	Paul Luniya
Screenplay	Leo Pyati
Prit Pjarn	Editor
Director of Photography	Olev Remsy
Yanno Pildma	Music
In colour	Olav Ehala
Animation Supervisors	Sound
Prit Pjarn	Yulo Saav
Milyara Kilik	
Animators	855 feet
Ebe Tramborg	9 minutes
Tiina Yuring	
Maya Bushmann	
Eda Kurg	

A cat wakes up to an alarm clock, and rushes around his room in a panic, attending to the clock, a towel, a chair, a broom and his glasses. When the clock breaks, a human hand removes it, and the cat is transported to the seaside. Sailing away on a boat, he encounters, among others, a clown and a snowman, and a cowboy concealed in a giant human foot, and ends up on a desert island where he engages in a duel of wits with a castaway, using his tail to magical effect. He acts as a pipe lighter to a bearded man, and when it rains, is hung up to dry by a giant woman. Finally, he unpeels a banana which turns into the moon; the human hand replaces the clock on it, and the cat is returned to the room and his frantic ritual.

Estonian animator Prit Pjarn specialises in quoting familiar animation imagery and styles to ironic and unsettling effect. Most notably and recently, *Hotel E* takes 60s psychedelia and drafts it into the nightmarishly violent context of a political parable about the differences between East and West, between the hell of everyday drudgery and the vapidity of the hedonist ethic.

Some of these aspects can be read into *Time Out*, although it is a far lighter piece. The main body of the film luxuriates in animation's potential for gleefully irresponsible play with forms. But it is nested within a bleak, almost Beckettian frame, where the cat – myopic, neurotic and blessed with a blue-and-red striped tail that leaves blurry traces in its wake – hares around in mechanical obeisance to the reality principle. The human hand – a close relation to the omnipotent, pen-wielding deity of Chuck Jones' films – dispels time by divine fiat, and the cat is whirled into a universe of suspended laws, ruled by pleasure (summed up by a jaunty reggae tune), but in which time can still exert its menace (a seagull briefly forms the hands of a clock).

This universe of the unbounded polymorphous perverse is ruled by two influences in particular. One is *Yellow Submarine*, in the flowing metamorphoses and in the wilful adoption of nursery-book preciousness: as when the centre of a bullet-riddled target crawls off to become a ladybird, or a bird uses its inverted beak as a rain hat. The other is Saul Steinberg, in the play on lines and trick perspective. It's pure Steinberg when the waves of the ocean turn into a washing line, or when a cowboy striding into the distance toples off the precariously balanced horizon. Disney is also paid due homage: the Seven Dwarfs, or their close relatives, make an appearance sporting protean pointy hats and chanting their "Hey ho" song.

The pleasure ends all too quickly, with the cat returned to its cell and the entire cast taking a bow – which gives this *Hellzapoppin'*-style fantasia an extra self-reflexive twist, and perhaps something of a metaphysical one too.

Jonathan Romney

OS D N

Mark Kermode reviews this month's rental/premiere releases and William Green new retail/retail premiere videos

Addictive cocktail: a Mugwump in David Cronenberg's 'Naked Lunch'



Rental

Barton Fink

Columbia TriStar CVT 13240
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Joel Coen
★ A horrifying, blackly comic maelstrom set against a hellish vision of 40s Hollywood. A socially aware writer sells his soul to write screenplays for wrestling movies and ends up sharing a hotel with the devil himself. (S&S February 1992)

Blame It on the Bellboy

Hollywood Pictures D913362
UK 1992

Certificate 15 Director Mark Herman
A dismal farce which marks a return to the mediocre genre of the 'saucy British comedy'. Three men with similar sounding names get their assignments confused while staying at the same hotel in Venice. Full of embarrassing bawdy gags. (S&S March 1992)

Blonde Fist

Buena Vista D541252
UK 1991

Certificate 15 Director Frank Clarke
Marge Clarke camps it up as a feisty Liverpudlian mother who turns to Stateside prizefighting. Frank Clarke's screenplay shows none of the wit of his earlier *Letter to Brezhnev* and his direction is equally ham-fisted. (S&S November 1991)

The Butcher's Wife

CIC Video VHB 2594
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Terry Hughes
★ Gentle, fey comedy offering whimsical laughs along the lines of *Ghost*. A clairvoyant (Demi Moore) spreads romantic havoc in New York by dishing out earthy advice to all and sundry. Lively performances by Moore and Jeff Daniels. (S&S August 1992)

Dead Again

CIC Video VHB 2574
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Kenneth Branagh
An amnesiac woman, spurred on by her involvement with a detective, relives a former-life trauma. Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson overact their way through this inept homage to Hitchcock, replete with silly wonky camera angles, ludicrous plot twists and a dopey dénouement. (S&S October 1991)

The Favour, the Watch and the Very Big Fish (Rue Saint-Sulpice)

20.20 Vision NVT 12973
France/UK 1991

Certificate 15 Director Ben Lewin
Partially successful surreal comedy about a religious photographer's discovery of a tramp who resembles Christ. Nicely offbeat performances by Jeff Goldblum and Bob Hoskins and some ambitious artistic swipes by Lewin. A strange but endearing movie. (S&S February 1992)

My Girl

Columbia TriStar CVT 13647
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Howard Zieff
Macaulay Culkin and Anna Chlumsky

experience the painful pleasures of growing up in the early 70s. Dan Aykroyd and Jamie Lee Curtis provide the adult interest which is, at best, negligible. (S&S February 1992)

Naked Lunch

First Independent VA 20164
UK/Canada 1991

Certificate 18 Director David Cronenberg
★ Video of the month! Cronenberg's heart and gut-wrenching adaptation of Burroughs' novel blends biographical detail with fantastical invention. Peter Weller is excellent as bug exterminator Bill Lee, a cypher for Burroughs' larger-than-life literary persona. An addictive cocktail of audaciously visceral metaphor, acerbic satire and dry wit. (S&S May 1992)

Once Upon a Crime

EV EVV 1226
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Eugene Levy
See review in this month's film section.

Shining Through

FoxVideo 5661
USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director David Seltzer
Half-witted WWII spy thriller with an even less credible plot than Seltzer's *Omen*. An ageing Melanie Griffith recounts how she single-handedly defeated the Nazis. Wooden performances, camp German accents and a dismal script. (S&S April 1992)

Rental premiere

Another You

20.20 Vision NVT 12981
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Maurice Phillips
Producer/Screenplay Ziggy Steinberg
Lead Actors Richard Pryor, Gene Wilder, Mercedes Ruehl 91 minutes
★ A pathological liar (Wilder) is released from an asylum into the care of an ex-con social worker (Pryor) whereupon he promptly impersonates a dead heir for illicit ends. The unashamedly rosey plot provides ample opportunity for the duo to indulge in verbal slapstick – but Pryor's sax jazz solo steals the show.

Bad Attitudes

FoxVideo 1946
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Alan Myerson
Producer Sandy Russell Gartin Screenplay Caleb Carr Lead Actors Richard Gilliland, Mary Edith Burrell, Ethan Randall, Jack Evans 88 minutes
Five bratish kids escape from a sentence at a summer camp and manage to foil a terrorist plot to hijack a plane. Standard yarn about rebel children learning an 'important' lesson.

Battling for Baby

Capital CHV 1033
USA 1992

Certificate PG Director Art Wolff Producers Steve McGlothen, Julie Anne Weitz Screenplay Walter Lockwood, Nancy Silvers Lead Actors Debbie Reynolds, Suzanne Pleshette, Courteney Cox, John Terlesky, Doug McClure 89 minutes
Two former childhood friends turned

jealous rivals battle to outdo each other when they become grandmothers to the same baby. Plodding family fun and feuding follow.

Blackmail

CIC Video VHB 2609
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director/Producer Ruben Preuss Screenplay Miguel Tejada-Flores, based on the short story "Passing for Love" by Bill Crenshaw Lead Actors Susan Blakely, Dale Midkiff, Beth Toussaint, John Saxon 89 minutes
A naïve woman falls for a debonair gigolo and finds herself being blackmailed by him and his girlfriend. Tiresome and turgid thriller which is sleepily directed.

The Burden of Proof

Odyssey ODY 324
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Mike Robe Producer John Perrin Flynn Screenplay John Gay, based on the novel by Scott Turow Lead Actors Brian Dennehy, Stefanie Powers, Hector Elizondo, Mel Harris, Adrienne Barbeau 167 minutes
★ Less of a whodunit than an in-depth character study of a man tormented by his wife's suicide and guilty past. Elizondo and Dennehy are superb in this TV mini-series compilation and Gay's screenplay impressively condenses Turow's novel – but at nearly three hours, it's still a long haul.

Company Business

Warner/MGM/UA PEV 54240
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Nicholas Meyer Producer Steven-Charles Jaffe Screenplay Nicholas Meyer Lead Actors Gene Hackman, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Kurtwood Smith 95 minutes
Spy thriller packed with all the usual double-crosses and dirty tricks. A retired CIA agent (Hackman) travels to Berlin to exchange a Russian spy and \$2 million for a captured American soldier. Worth it for Hackman's performance.

Crooked Hearts

Warner/MGM/UA PEV 52295
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Michael Bortman Producers Rick Stevenson, Dale Pollock, Gil Friesen Screenplay Michael Bortman, based on the novel by Robert Boswell Lead Actors Vincent D'Onofrio, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Peter Berg, Juliette Lewis, Peter Coyote 108 minutes
★ Endearing family crisis yarn with a solid cast, wryly observed script and unobtrusive direction. A son who hates his father physically and emotionally destroys his family home. Meanwhile, his father's past reveals it's own ominous skeletons. Intriguing fun.

Dead in the Water

CIC Video VHA 1561
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director William Condon Producer Michael M. Scott Screenplay Eleanor E. Gaver, Robert Seidenberg, Walter Klenhard, based on the novel *Web of Murder* by Harry Whittington Lead Actors Bryan Brown, Teri Hatcher, Veronica Cartwright 86 minutes
Not very funny or suspenseful suspense-comedy. The husband (Brown) of an irritating but wealthy woman plots to

murder her so that he can be with his secretary. Laughs fail to flow despite the efforts of the self-consciously zany musical score.

Forgotten Prisoners

First Independent VA 20159

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Robert Greenwald
Producer Steve McGlothen Screenplay Rex Weiner, Cindy Myers Lead Actors Ron Silver, Hector Elizondo, Roger Daltrey 90 minutes

TV rehash of *Midnight Express* focusing on Amnesty International's attempts to campaign for the release of political prisoners. Jordan Ford (Silver) teams up with Hasan Demir (Elizondo) in strife-ridden Turkey. Roger Daltrey mans the phones.

Hurricane Smith

Warners PEV 35424

USA 1992

Certificate 18 Director Colin Budds
Producers Daniel O'Toole, Stanley O'Toole Screenplay Peter Kinloch Lead Actors Carl Weathers, Jurgen Prochnow, Cassandra Delaney, Tony Bonner, David Argue 82 minutes

Pedestrian action pic featuring the rippling pecs of Carl Weathers. Following his mother's death, Hurricane Smith goes to Australia to save his sister from her life as a prostitute and ends up battling with a fiendish underworld king. Lousy score by Brian May.

I Posed for Playboy

Guild 8689

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Stephen Stafford
Producer Cleve Landsberg Screenplay Cathleen Young, Ann Donahue Lead Actors Lynda Carter, Michele Greene, Amanda Petersen 89 minutes
Three women from different backgrounds and for varying reasons pose for *Playboy*. Sanitised 'erotic true-story' which concludes that baring all for *Playboy* is great for your self-esteem but bad for your reputation. Suffers from an uneven script and flat direction but Carter turns in a good performance.

Killer Image

First Independent VA 20162

Canada 1991

Certificate 18 Director David Winning
Producers Rudy Barichello, David Winning, Bruce Harvey Screenplay Stan Edmonds, David Winning, Jason Summers Lead Actors Michael Ironside, M. Emmet Walsh, John Pyper-Ferguson, Krista Erickson 91 minutes

★ The brother of an assassinated photographer is pursued by a senator's psycho sibling on the trail of an incriminating negative. Ironside is terrific as the maniac in this sprightly formula thriller and the upbeat direction gives new life to a well-worn theme.

Lies of the Twins

CIC Video VHA 1539

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Tim Hunter Producer Tim Zinneman Screenplay Mel Frohman, Walter Klenhard, based on the novel by Rosamond Smith Lead Actors Aidan Quinn, Isabella Rossellini 89 minutes
★ Cracking little thriller, well-written and sassily directed by Tim Hunter

(helmsman of many of the finest *Twin Peaks* episodes). A fashion model (Rossellini) finds her affections torn between her mousy psychiatrist lover and his sadistic twin (Quinn in both roles). A post-*Dead Ringers* TV treat.

Live from Death Row

Capital CHV 1035

USA 1992

Certificate 18 Director Patrick Duncan
Producer Julie Bilson Ahlberg Screenplay Patrick Duncan Lead Actors Bruce Davison, Joanna Cassidy, Art LaFleur, Calvin Levels, Julio Osar Mechoso 92 minutes

★ A news reporter and her cameraman are held hostage by the inmates of death row and are forced to broadcast from the inside. Duncan intelligently juggles gritty videotape footage with glossy prime time visuals in this riveting thriller. Good script and performances as well as horrific insights into the death penalty.

Past Midnight

Guild 8682

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Jan Eliasberg
Producer Lisa M. Hansen Screenplay Frank Norwood Lead Actors Rutger Hauer, Natasha Richardson, Clancy Brown, Guy Boyd 96 minutes

★ Taut thriller packed with plot twists and with a few genuine surprises. A social worker (Richardson) falls for a parolee (Hauer) who served fifteen years for killing his pregnant wife. Hauer is in fine form as the tortured ex-con.

Pranks

VPD 468

USA 1981

Certificate 18 Directors Jeffrey Obrow/Stephen Carpenter Producer Jeffrey Obrow Screenplay Stephen Carpenter, Jeffrey Obrow, Stacy Giachino Lead Actors Laura Lapinski, Stephen Sachs, David Snow, Pamela Holland, Daphne Zuniga 83 minutes
Previously banned 'nasty' movie (released in the US as *The Dawn that Dripped Blood*) released with ten seconds cut from the power-drill murder sequence. A group of young students are plagued by a prankster's murderous antics – deaths by various household implements ensue. Dreary slasher fodder.

Shout

CIC Video VHA 1524

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Jeffrey Hornaday
Producer Robert Simonds Screenplay Joe Gayton Lead Actors James Walters, John Travolta, Heather Graham, Richard Jordan, Linda Fiorentino 84 minutes
Amiable 50s-based teen drama spoiled by the use of out of place contemporary music. A juvenile delinquent (Walters) learns about the wonders of rock'n'roll from his music teacher – a bequipped wanderer (Travolta). Endearing performances but risible teen angst dialogue and dreadful miming.

Sins of the Father

Odyssey ODY 322

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Kevin James Dobson
Producer Jay Benson Screenplay Andy Tennant Lead Actors George Dzundza,



Sacrificed for art: Emmanuelle Béart and Michel Piccoli in 'La Belle Noiseuse-Divertimento'

Valerie Bertinelli, Peter Dobson, David Marshall Grant, Mico Mercurio, Randle Mell 92 minutes
Unremarkable TV thriller boosted by a sturdy and well-chosen cast. A young DA (Bertinelli) uncovers her policeman father's involvement in a gang boss' empire.

Summer Vacation

First Independent VA 20163

USA 1992

Certificate 18 Director Bob Logan
Producer Donald P. Borchers Screenplay Bob Logan Lead Actors Corey Feldman, Sarah Douglas, Jack Nance 86 minutes
Saucy gags ahoy as teen heartthrob Corey Feldman leads a group of beach bums in a waterskiing competition against a rival resort. Clearly aimed at young teenagers, making the 18 certificate seem rather pointless. From the director of *Repossessed*.

White Lies

CIC Video VHA 1536

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Bill Condon Producer Oscar L. Costo Screenplay Nevin Schreiner Lead Actors Gregory Hines, Annette O'Toole, Bill Nunn, Greg Henry 89 minutes
Self-consciously worthy TV thriller about an African-American's attempts to clear the tarnished name of his wrongly hanged father. Hines provides an attractive lead but the script offers no surprises.

Wildflower

High Fliers HFV 9004

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Diane Keaton
Producer Carroll Newman Screenplay Sara Flanagan, based on her novel Lead Actors Patricia Arquette, Beau Bridges, Susan Blakely, William McNamara, Reese Witherspoon 94 minutes
★ An epileptic and partially deaf girl, imprisoned by her brutal stepfather, is saved and adopted by two teenagers. Strangely alluring despite the heavy doses of sentiment. Arquette is terrific as the beleaguered prisoner and Keaton earns her directorial spurs.

A Woman Scorned

Braveworld BRV 10144

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Dick Lowry
Producers Dick Lowry, Anne Kindberg Screenplay Joe Cacaci Lead Actors Meredith

Baxter, Stephen Collins, Michelle Johnson 95 minutes

Gripping true-life TV drama about a woman who murdered her successful husband after he left her for a younger woman. The strong subject matter provides the basis for a diverting melodrama and raises serious questions about the rights a wife has to a share in her husband's success.

Retail

The Abyss

FoxVideo WS 1561

USA 1989 Price £12.99

Certificate 15 Director James Cameron
Superior science fiction thriller for fans of stygian ocean depths. Ed Harris and Mary Elisabeth Mastrantonio encounter strange beings under the sea. (MFB No. 670) Widescreen version

The Adventures of Milo and Otis (Koneko Monogatari)

MCEG Virgin VVD 1068

Japan 1986 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Masanori Hata
An unlikely live-action 'Incredible Journey' featuring a puppy and a kitten who make friends with other cute creatures during their travels. For children and narrated by Dudley Moore. (S&S August 1991)

Air America

Guild GLD 50992

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Roger Spottiswoode
Black comedy about privateer aviators running illegal CIA drug operations in Laos during the Vietnam war. More cynical than *M*A*S*H* but not as funny. With Mel Gibson and Robert Downey Jr. (MFB No. 684)

La Belle Noiseuse – Divertimento

Artificial Eye ART 046

France 1991 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Jacques Rivette
★ Two-hour reframing of Rivette's original four-hour masterpiece (re-cut by the director and using alternative takes). Artist Michel Piccoli puzzles over a cherished unfinished painting and his relationship with two women – his new muse, a young woman (Emmanuelle Béart), and his original model, wife Jane Birkin. (Full-length version reviewed in S&S April 1992) Subtitles

Beyond the Stars

Braveworld STV 2169

USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director David Saperstein
A sickly, alcoholic ex-astronaut (Martin Sheen) has his batteries recharged by a space-mad youngster (Christian Slater). Sharon Stone makes a brief appearance. (Rental premiere S&S May 1991)

Bill of Divorcement

Braveworld SPT 71062

USA 1932 Price £5.99

Certificate PG Director George Cukor
Stagey adaptation of a Clemence Dane play about a shell-shocked war veteran (John Barrymore) who returns home from an asylum to find his wife has divorced him and is about to marry another man. Memorable only as Katharine Hepburn's screen debut. (MFB No. 506) B/W

Blue Velvet

Fox World Cinema WC 5050

USA 1986 Price £19.99 (box set)

Certificate 18 Director David Lynch
★ Lynch's chilling and often surreal presentation of life under the surface of a small town remains his finest achievement. A severed ear leads local boy Kyle MacLachlan to a night-club



Closet detective: Kyle MacLachlan

singer (Isabella Rossellini) and gets him into serious trouble with Dennis Hopper. (MFB No. 639) Widescreen version

Close My Eyes

Artificial Eye ART 037

UK 1991 Price £15.99

Certificate 18 Director Stephen Poliakoff
★ A brother (Clive Owen) and sister (Saskia Reeves) are drawn into a sexual liaison which turns into an obsession for the brother. Alan Rickman, as the betrayed but unperturbed husband, gives a marvellously edgy performance (S&S September 1991)

Cry-Baby

CIC Video VHR 1447

USA 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director John Waters
★ A pouting Johnny Depp stars in this fond and energetic send-up of 50s teen musicals. Depp, as a tough hood who sends the girls wild by shedding a tear, is joined by a colourful bunch of actors - Iggy Pop, Traci Lords and Ricki Lake. (MFB No. 679)

Delicatessen

Electric Pictures EP 0005

France 1990 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Directors Jean-Pierre Jeunet/Marc Caro
★ Effortlessly modish, comic-strip view of a post-apocalyptic future, where varied eccentrics in a tenement-house exist off black-market human meat supplied by the local landlord/butcher. A new tenant



Far from home: 'E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial'

(and next intended victim) falls in love with the butcher's daughter who enlists the aid of the vegetarian resistance movement. (S&S January 1992) Subtitles

Die Hard 2

FoxVideo WS 1850

USA 1990 Price £12.99

Certificate 15 Director Renny Harlin
Noisy remake in which blue-collar hero Bruce Willis battles against airport terrorists. (MFB No. 680) Widescreen version

Easy Come, Easy Go

CIC Video VHR 2602

USA 1966 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director John Rich
A navy frogman (Elvis Presley) discovers buried treasure and has to fight off the usual foes to claim it. (MFB No. 401)

E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial

CIC Video VHR 1578

USA 1982 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Steven Spielberg
★ An ugly but cuddly alien lands in an American suburb and is befriended by a child who helps him make an intergalactic phone call to his home in the stars. Spielberg's best fairy-tale cunningly echoes the New Testament for maximum sentimental effect. (MFB No. 587) Widescreen version

Female Jungle (aka The Hangover)

Castle Hendring HEN 2372

USA 1956 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Bruno Ve Sota
Poorly acted and directed murder mystery with Jayne Mansfield. A dogged detective (Lawrence Tierney) looks for clues when an actress is murdered at a night-club. (MFB No. 281) B/W

Girls in Prison

Castle Hendring HEN 2367

USA 1956 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Edward L. Cahn
A woman serving a sentence for robbery has a chance of escape thanks to a conveniently timed earthquake. (MFB No. 272) B/W

Grease/Grease 2

CIC Video VHR 2626/2627

USA 1978/1982 Price £10.99 each

Certificate PG Directors Randal Kleiser/Patricia Birch
Two unmemorable, mechanically constructed musicals set in the 50s era of school dances and drive-ins. John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John star in the first and part two is notable only for a young Michelle Pfeiffer. (MFB Nos. 536/583) Widescreen versions

Hamlet

Columbia TriStar CVR 22762

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Franco Zeffirelli
Mel Gibson as Prince Hamlet makes a

brave stab at Shakespeare in this very sober version of the play. Gibson is joined by Alan Bates (Claudius), Paul Scofield (the King's ghost), Glenn Close (Queen Gertrude) and Helena Bonham-Carter (Ophelia). (S&S May 1991)

Henry and June

CIC Video VHR 1466

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Philip Kaufman
Adapting sections of Anaïs Nin's diaries, Kaufman takes us through the multiple sexual encounters of Henry Miller (Fred Ward), Nin (Maria de Medeiros) and Miller's wife (Uma Thurman). (MFB No. 684)

Hudson Hawk

Columbia TriStar CVR 22456

USA 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Michael Lehmann
Frenetic, incoherent crime caper about a cat burglar. The movie wastes the talents of capable actors like Bruce Willis and Andie MacDowell. (S&S July 1991)

Jesus Christ Superstar

CIC Video VHR 1584

USA 1973 £10.99

Certificate PG Director Norman Jewison
Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's stage rock opera is moved to the big screen, complete with desert locations, tanks and jets. Melvyn Bragg collaborated on the screenplay. (MFB No. 476)

The Jolson Story

Columbia TriStar CVR 11087

USA 1946 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Alfred E. Green
A pious but energetic showbiz biography, shot in lavish Technicolor, with Larry Parks miming to the real Al Jolson. The candid racial stereotyping of Jewish and black people is typical of the period. (MFB No. 155)

A Kiss Before Dying

CIC Video VHR 1513

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director James Dearden
After *Fatal Attraction*, Dearden turns his attention to a male villain. Ambitious Matt Dillon pursues an heiress, kills her and then sets his sights on her sister - Sean Young plays both women. (S&S June 1991)

Ladies of the Chorus

Columbia TriStar CVR 13196

USA 1948 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Phil Karlson
★ Not quite Marilyn Monroe's screen debut, but this B movie offered the starlet her first proper role - the well-loved one as the burlesque singer pursued by a dapper socialite. (MFB No. 182) B/W

Lethal Weapon/Lethal Weapon 2

Warner PES 12580/12581

USA 1987/1989 Price £12.99 each

Certificate 18 Director Richard Donner
★ The odd couple, crime-busting partnership of Mel Gibson and Danny Glover is more likeable than that of 48 Hours' heroes Nick Nolte and Eddie Murphy. These well-made cop thrillers made the reputation of writer Shane Black and restored the credentials of director Richard Donner. Gibson and Glover track down the usual baddies. (MFB Nos. 643/669) Widescreen version

The Longest Day

FoxVideo WS 1021

USA 1962 Price £12.99

Certificate PG Directors Ken Annakin/Andrew Marton/Bernhard Wicki/Darryl F. Zanuck
John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Robert Mitchum, Robert Ryan, Richard Burton and Curt Jurgens all appear in this epic war movie about the WWII invasion of Normandy. Three solid hours of war. (MFB No. 346) Widescreen version

Mad Max

Warner PES 12545

Australia 1979 Price £12.99

Certificate 18 Director George Miller
Mel Gibson, in his first and most memorable role, plays a futuristic vigilante cop on the trail of a crazed motorcycle gang. This edition restores Australian accents to the cast who were dubbed into American for the overseas release. (MFB No. 550) Widescreen version

Miller's Crossing

FoxVideo 1852

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Joel Coen
A downbeat and introverted gangster movie with the Coen brothers (Ethan Coen as producer) in an uncharacteristically hesitant mood. There are memorable scenes, but Gabriel Byrne as a gambling gangster and Albert Finney as a corrupt politician fail to convince as Irish-Americans. (MFB No. 685)

The Night Is Young (Mauvais Sang)

Artificial Eye ART 039

France 1986 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Leos Carax
★ This clever (although hollow) futuristic thriller gives the critics who claim Carax as the next Godard what they want - flashy visuals and a self-consciously poetic narrative. Denis Lavant gets involved with a gang led by Michel Piccoli and finds himself falling for Piccoli's young girlfriend (Juliette Binoche). (MFB No. 645) Subtitles

On a Clear Day You Can See Forever

CIC Video VHR 2649

USA 1970 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Vincente Minnelli
★ Minnelli's farewell to the musical is an extraordinary blend of ideas with Barbra Streisand as a chain-smoker who keeps flipping back to a former life as a Regency belle and Yves Montand as a singing hypnotist. Jack Nicholson makes an appearance with a sitar. (MFB No. 452)

Pacific Heights

FoxVideo 1900

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director John Schlesinger
A manipulative and psychopathic tenant (Michael Keaton) destroys the domestic bliss of a yuppie couple (Melanie Griffith, Matthew Modine). Not bad, but not in the same league as *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*. (MFB No. 685)

Paint Your Wagon

CIC Video VHR 2630

USA 1969 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Joshua Logan
This is almost certainly the only musical in which you'll ever see Clint Eastwood. Eastwood plays a young man who

teams up with a disreputable drunk (Lee Marvin) in a search for gold. (MFB No. 434) *Widescreen version*

Q & A

MCEG Virgin VVD 1035
USA 1990 Price £10.99

★ *Certificate 18* Director Sidney Lumet
Gripping return to form for veteran director Lumet in this tough thriller about police corruption. Nick Nolte, Armand Assante and Timothy Hutton all get involved. (MFB No. 687)

Reform School Girl

Castle Hendring HEN 2365
USA 1957 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Edward Bernds
Exploitation B movie about juvenile delinquent girls in a reform school. (MFB No. 290) *B/W*

The Sheltering Sky

Fox World Cinema WC2419
UK/Italy 1990 Price £19.99 (box set)
Certificate 18 Director Bernardo Bertolucci
★ As in Paul Bowles' novel, Kit Moresby (Debra Winger) travels through Morocco and beyond in the late 40s to save her marriage and ultimately to lose herself. (MFB No. 684) *Widescreen version*

Stepping Out

CIC Video VHR 2590
USA 1991 Price £10.99
Certificate PG Director Lewis Gilbert
A group of hesitant amateurs, seeking solace from the world at a tap-dance class, practise for the big-night charity gala and learn about life in the process. (S&S September 1991)

Tora! Tora! Tora!

FoxVideo WS 1017
USA/Japan 1970 Price £12.99
Certificate U Directors Richard Fleischer/
Japanese episodes: Toshio Masuda/
Kinji Fukasaku
The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor recreated in a form aptly described by David Pirie as "a prototype disaster movie". The sinking of a whole fleet of warships is spectacular. (MFB No. 442) *Widescreen version*

Toto the Hero (Toto le héros)

Electric Pictures EP 0006
Belgium/France/Germany
1991 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Jaco Van Dormael
★ Winner of the Camera d'Or, this highly enjoyable tale of a man obsessed by the idea that he has been exchanged at birth with his wealthier neighbour, and thus missed out on the joys of life, is fast-paced and witty. (S&S January 1992) *Subtitles*

True Colors

CIC Video VHR 2517
USA 1991 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Herbert Ross
The Candidate for yuppies – two college friends (ruthless social climber John Cusack and patrician James Spader) vie for a seat in Congress.

The Valdez Horses (Valdez il Mezzosangue)

Braveworld SPT 71075
Italy/Spain/France 1973 Price £5.99
Certificate 15 Director John Sturges
Well-carpentered but melancholy Western set on a horse farm in 19th century New Mexico. Running the farm

is Charles Bronson who takes a runaway boy under his wing. (MFB No. 487)

Voodoo Woman

Castle Hendring HEN 2364
USA 1957 Price £10.99
Certificate PG Director Edward L. Cahn
Low-budget jungle horror which looks like it was made with off-cuts and discarded costumes from the same team's *The She Creature*. A mad scientist turns an adventuress (Maria English) into a murderous monster. (MFB No. 281) *B/W*

Woman of the Dunes (Suna No Onna)

Connoisseur CR 077
Japan 1964 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director Hiroshi Teshigahara
★ Highly original, low-budget two-hander based on a novel by Kobo Abe about a scholar trapped in a sand-walled pit with an inarticulate young widow. Intense performances and extraordinary camera work. (MFB No. 377) *B/W Subtitles*

Xanadu

CIC Video VHR 1018
USA 1980 Price £10.99
Certificate PG Director Robert Greenwald
Odd couple Gene Kelly and Olivia Newton-John struggle to sing and dance to a score by Jeff Lynne and John Farrar in this dreadful musical romance. (MFB No. 561)

Retail collections

Korda Collection:

The Four Feathers

UK 1939 Director Zoltan Korda

Knight Without Armour

UK 1937 Director Jacques Feyder *B/W*

The Private Life of Henry VIII

UK 1933 Director Alexander Korda *B/W*

That Hamilton Woman

USA 1941 Director Alexander Korda *B/W*
CTE Video CV 2001/2006/2002/2003
Price £12.99 each *Certificate U*

★ The prolific director and producer Alexander Korda is best-remembered as a self-confident maker of lavish, crowd-pleasing historical costume dramas – fine examples of these being *The Private Life of Henry VIII* with Charles Laughton and Korda's second wife Merle Oberon, and *That Hamilton Woman* with Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh. The other two in this collection are adventure romances, *Knight Without Armour* with Marlene Dietrich and Robert Donat, set



'The Private Life of Henry VIII'

during the Russian Revolution, and *The Four Feathers* with John Clements as an English officer proving his bravery in Africa. (MFB Nos. 65/42/151/91)

Rodgers & Hammerstein Collection:

Carousel

USA 1956 Director Henry King

The King and I

USA 1956 Director Walter Lang

Oklahoma!

USA 1955 Director Fred Zinnemann

The Sound of Music

USA 1965 Director Robert Wise

South Pacific

USA 1958 Director Joshua Logan
FoxVideo WS 1713/1004/7020/1051/7045
Price £12.99 each *Certificate U*
★ These films represent the era of lengthy song and dance extravaganzas – shamelessly escapist and infinitely watchable. Gordon MacRae stars in *Carousel*, returning to earth from heaven to help his wife (Shirley Jones) and child; In *The King and I* governess Deborah Kerr becomes the confidante of the King of Siam (Yul Brynner); *Oklahoma!* finds Gordon MacRae together with Shirley Jones again in a cowboy musical; Julie Andrews sings her heart out in *The Sound of Music*; and in *South Pacific* Mitzi Gaynor and Rossano Brazzi find love on an island during WWII. (MFB Nos. 268/272/273/376/293) *Widescreen versions*

Retail premiere

Any Time Any Place

Braveworld STV 2122
USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director Joe D'Amato
Production Company Filmirage Screenplay
Helen Drake, Marc Carpenter Lead Actors
Ruth Collins, Robert Labrosse 87 minutes
Erotic thriller of dubious value about a night-club singer and a wild gambler who indulge in a game of cat and mouse.

The Bad Sleep Well

(Warui Yatsu Hodo Yoku Nemeru)

Connoisseur CR 076
Japan 1960 Price £15.99
Certificate PG Director Akira Kurosawa
Producers Tomuyuki Tanaka, Akira Kurosawa Screenplay Hideo Oguni, Eijiro Kusaka, Akira Kurosawa, Ryuzo Kikushima, Shinobu Hashimoto
Lead Actors Toshiro Mifune, Masayuki Mori, Kyoki Kagawa, Tatsuya Mihashi 130 minutes
★ A tangled contemporary gangster tragedy with overtones of *Hamlet* as Toshiro Mifune sets out to avenge his father's murder. This was the first feature brought out under the director's own production company. *B/W Subtitles*

Change of Habit

CIC Video VHR 1565
USA 1969 Price £10.99
Certificate U Director William Graham
Producer Jo Connelly Screenplay James Lee, S.S. Schwartz, Eric Bercovici Lead Actors Elvis Presley, Mary Tyler Moore, Barbara McNair, Ed Asner 97 minutes
The first US film to have its UK première on TV. Elvis plays a singing ghetto clinic doctor with a crush on a social

worker (Mary Tyler Moore) who turns out to be a nun.

Dominion Tank Police: Acts 1 & 2

Manga Video MANY 1003
Japan 1989 Price £12.99
Certificate 15 Director Koichi Mashimo
Producers Ritsuko Kakita, Kazuhiko Inomata, Tamaki Harada Screenplay
Masamune Shirow, Koichi Mashimo
Animation/Design Hiroki Tagaki 80 minutes
Animated heroics from the cult Japanese Manga label, set in the usual future world of toxic waste-polluted cities and armour-plated law enforcers.

Duel of Hearts

Castle Vision CVI 1418
UK 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate PG Director John Hough
Executive Producer Lew Grade Screenplay
Terence Feely, based on the novel by Barbara Cartland Lead Actors Michael York, Billie Whitelaw, Geraldine Chaplin, Virginia McKenna, Richard Johnson, Benedict Taylor, Alison Doody 90 minutes
Bodice-heaving Barbara Cartland fantasy borrowed from *Jane Eyre*, with the multitude of stars running around in TV period costumes. Lady Caroline (Alison Doody) tries to win the heart of the mysterious Lord Vane Brecon (Benedict Taylor).

A Ghost in Monte Carlo

Castle Vision CVI 1419
UK 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate PG Director John Hough
Executive Producer Lew Grade Screenplay
Terence Feely, based on the novel by Barbara Cartland Lead Actors Oliver Reed, Lysette Anthony, Sarah Miles, Fiona Fullerton, Christopher Plummer, Samantha Eggar 90 minutes
More Barbara Cartland-by-numbers with a familiar cast of old stagers roped in to play taciturn noblemen, unscrupulous foreigners and the usual young woman in danger.

Laughing Gravy/Chickens Come Home

MCEG Virgin HRO 052
USA 1931 Price £10.99
Certificate U Director James W. Horne
Production Company MGM Screenplay
(unknown) Lead Actors Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy 45 minutes
★ Two accomplished comedy shorts from Laurel and Hardy, dating from a period when Stan and Ollie were beginning to make use of sound and stretch themselves into full-length features. *B/W* or *colourised versions available*

Lonesome Dove

Braveworld STV 2145/2146/2147
(box set STV 4007)
USA 1989 Price £10.99 each
(or £29.99 box set of three tapes)
Certificate 15 Director Simon Wincer
Producer William D. Wittliff Screenplay
William D. Wittliff, based on the novel by Larry McMurtry Lead Actors Robert Duvall, Tommy Lee Jones, Anjelica Huston, Danny Glover, Robert Urich, Frederic Forrest, Ricky Schroeder 480 minutes
★ Satisfying, high-quality Western with an epic sweep and a sense of dramatic purpose that does full justice to McMurtry's novel. Robert Duvall drives his cattle from Texas to the wilds of Montana, reviewing his loves and long life along the way.



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by Peter Cowie

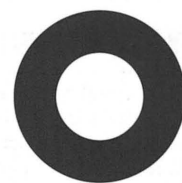
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Journey to freedom

From Adam Kossoff

In his wandering and under-researched survey of the Channel 4 Independent Film Season (S&S August), James Saynor found reason to criticise *Turbulence*, which I wrote and directed. Significantly, he fails to point out that the film is about a teenage girl fleeing home because she begins to recall the time her father sexually abused her.

In discussions after screenings of *Turbulence* I have often noticed that women spectators have been more responsive and sympathetic to the subject and its depiction than have men. I can only put this down to male defence mechanisms, akin to homophobia, and Saynor's omission probably has the same source.

In accusing *Turbulence* of failing because it somehow didn't "draw energy from any grassroots source", he ignores the fact that sexual abuse cuts across race and class. This typical liberal evaluation, whereby you score points for poverty and deprivation, regardless of emotional depth, is an affliction British fiction can do without. If Saynor had chosen to contact me, he would have discovered that the film is set in the middle class because sexual abuse is too often presented as being a 'working-class' problem, which isn't the case.

Saynor fails to signal the film's visual and aesthetic concerns, and his bracketing of it as an "over-intellectual" art film (a compliment given current contemporary trends) is his problem and contrary to some of the viewing experiences I have had with young people. To paraphrase Saynor: "if words like 'freedom' and 'inspiration' and 'sincerity' and 'energy' are to mean anything, then we, the film-makers, need the critics to look more closely at their own practice in order to facilitate ours. It's unfortunate that Saynor was unable to apply his own standards more fully to himself, particularly as, above all else, *Turbulence* is a film about a teenage girl's escape from an emotional prison and her journey towards 'freedom' and self-assertion.

London N17

Disablist attitudes

From Stephen Sheach

Tristram Powell (S&S July) criticises your reviewer Jill McGreal for sounding "dangerously close to condescension" in her review of his film, *The Count of Solar* (S&S May). I read with interest what he said he was trying to achieve in the film, but feel that all he has done is to conform to another cinema disablist stereotype.

In her book *Pride Against Prejudice*, Jenny Morris draws broad categorisations for the way disability is represented within Western cultural forms. These are:

- Disability to represent evil: Captain Hook, Richard III, facial disablements in slasher movies, for instance, Freddie.
- Using disability to investigate male fears of vulnerability: *Tumbledown*, *My Left Foot*, *Born on the Fourth of July*; that is, how awful it is for a man to be dependent on others. It also links this vulnerability with sexual impotence.
- Disability to heighten female vulnerabil-

ity: thrillers such as *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* and *Wait Until Dark*.

d. Overcoming all odds (or 'Super-crip'): often linked to b. in order to give the Hollywood upbeat ending, for example, *Born on the Fourth of July* and *My Left Foot*. The main characters are heroes because they 'overcome' their impairment to write a book. Though the character is positive, the disability is presented as negative.

e. Disability means that life is not of value: the ultimate negative image whereby death is preferable to disability. This was promoted in the Nazi-sponsored eugenics films (which resulted in around 200,000 disabled people dying in gas chambers) and continues to be a subject of various US television movies or of *Whose Life is it Anyway?*

f. Non-disabled person as rescuer: the category in which *The Count of Solar* is clearly placed. An able-bodied person is the 'hero' of the piece; the disabled person exists as the object, the conduit through which the hero shows us his/her qualities. Other examples include *Children of a Lesser God* and the doctor in *My Left Foot*.

In *The Count of Solar*, a young hearing-impaired person (Joseph) is unable to function within society's rules and is imprisoned until 'rescued' by the Abbé, who has been credited with inventing and teaching sign language (as if it hadn't been used by hearing-impaired people for generations). The Abbé, who is able-bodied, proves himself necessary to get Joseph returned to 'normal' society as represented by his inheritance - hence the able-bodied world remains the correct one.

When Joseph chooses to break away from this influence, he is depicted as ungrateful and undeserving. While the Abbé dies surrounded by his admirers, including the repentant Joseph, Joseph dies an ignominious and presumably lonely death on a battlefield due to not hearing the bugler sound the retreat. (Which in itself is factual nonsense, since people don't depend on one sense alone for their understanding.) Joseph is therefore punished for attempting to control his own agenda.

Disabled people will never be more positively represented within film while their impairments are regarded negatively. Ultimately I believe attitudes will only change when disabled people are making the films and are writing the reviews. In the meantime, films reviewed this year in *Sight and Sound* with negative representations of disabled people include: *People Under the Stairs* (victims), *Afraid of the Dark* (victims), *Hook* (evil), *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle* (passive male), *The Count of Solar* (non-disabled rescuer), *Lawnmower Man* (passive male turning evil) and *The Lunatic* (vulnerable male).

No films have had a positive depiction of disabled people. Therefore this is no minor issue.

Glasgow

What happens next?

From Simon Kennedy

Ah good, I thought, opening July's issue of *Sight and Sound* - an article on *Alien*!. Before seeing the film it would be interesting to get a little background and some idea of the themes that Amy Taubin thought were worth watching for. However, as I read through the first page I began to get a funny feeling. I flipped the page and read the last couple of paragraphs and my worst



Something's coming... but don't tell us the ending. See 'What happens next?'

suspicions were confirmed - she had given away the ending.

I have trained myself not to read the final paragraphs of the synopses in the S&S Review section, but now it seems the feature articles are ambushing us. When talking about films that have been out for some time, there's no harm in revealing the end, but please, when writing about movies that have yet to see their release, don't give away the whole plot. For most of us, finding out 'what happens next' is still a large part of the pleasure of cinema-going.

London NW2

Modesty forbids

From Andrew Graham

Since Michael Eaton is too modest to admit it (Letters, S&S August), perhaps John Boorman should be reminded that Michael wrote the screenplay for *Fellow Traveller*, one of the most structurally ambitious and yet accessible films to come out of Britain in many years, and certainly one of the best.

As John Boorman's *Projections* proves, there is more to film-making than standing behind a camera with a megaphone.

Frome, Somerset

History as farce

From Stuart Urban

My thanks to Philip Kemp for reviewing *An Ungentlemanly Act* (about the opening debacle of the Falklands War) and for the various positive points he made about it (S&S August). However, I must answer the assertion that my tragicomic handling of the subject matter created an often "pervasive mood of over-facile irony".

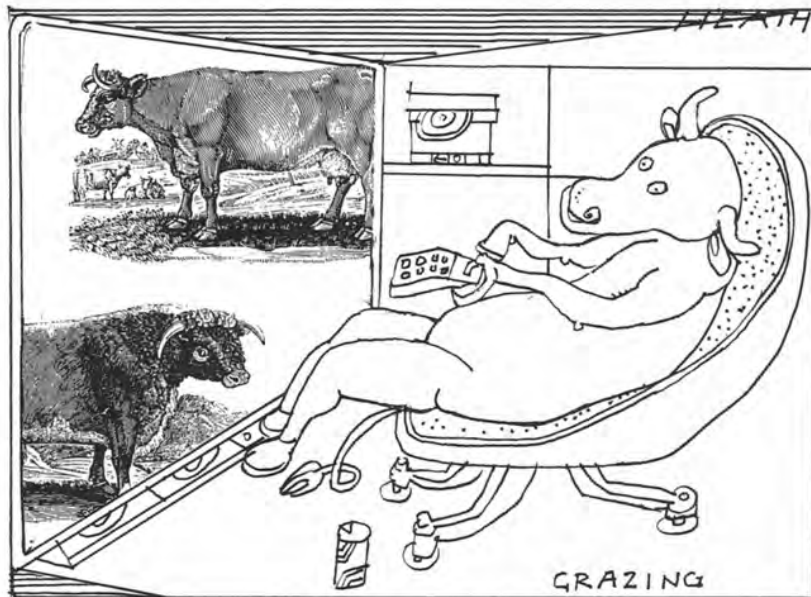
The vast majority of critics approved of the film in general and of this approach in particular, suggesting that many people did in fact come to terms with the historical truth as I interpreted it. I had expected criticism in the vein of Kemp's, particularly from the right-wing press, but people on both sides of the political spectrum were enthusiastic. If this episode of Britain's colonial twilight was Ealingesque and farcical in its essence, the challenge was to make an audience relive it as such, and I cannot see how this goal meant coming "dangerously close" to patronising viewers whose intelligence I respected by offering scrupulously researched evidence. The very points which Kemp presents as the film's "explicit play" with Ealing comedy all took place. Actual events suggested this film's style, not *Passport to Pimlico*! Philip Kemp has put a critical cart before the historical horse.

The core of the film and my primary objective is empathy for the human beings caught up in that mess, an objective which Philip Kemp found more favour with. This happens to be the film's more conventional element, rather than the tragicomic dimension - which he labelled "scarcely original". Yet how many films of its genre (i.e. factually based drama) can he enumerate which treated recent British history or war as tragicomic or farcical?

My aim was actually to play against the safe tradition of 'dramadoc'. Perhaps the cause of experimentation in single television films (which was championed in your August editorial) has been helped if the *Daily Mirror* critic could write "thank God the BBC is still brave enough to bring us drama like this".

London W6

Just entertainment



Benjamin Woolley

Go ahead. You write it. Yes, you, the reader. Sure, you paid £2 for this magazine because you wanted to read it. Sure, I'm paid to write it. But the media and computer industry (including Hollywood) is telling us with increasing regularity that is what you want: 'interactive media'. So that is what you shall have.

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Aha. You are reading this paragraph straight after reading the previous one, aren't you? This means you are yielding to the totalitarian logic of narrative. You are allowing me to dictate what you discover and when you discover it. You are not, as they like to say in the industry, 'grazing': picking and choosing the information that suits your personal needs and interests. Remember, I, the author, am dead. You are

now the author as well as the reader.

In April Philips launched 'CD-I', short for Compact Disc-Interactive. This is a technology that allows standard CDs to be used for storing all sorts of information other than music: pictures, games, text. A CD-I player is really a personal computer dressed up as a video player. There is no keyboard, just a remote control with a small joystick built into it. It connects straight into a standard television set. To 'play' a CD you load it into the player as you would any CD (indeed, CD-I players can play normal audio CDs) and interact with whatever comes up on screen. So far, all you get are still images, text and computer graphics, but moving video is promised by the end of the year. Ultimately, claim the technologists, CD-I will form the basis of interactive movies, where you plot your own path through the film's setting and even become one of its characters.

Behind the development of the idea of interactive media is growing concern about the state of American television. For intellectuals and opinion formers, it has become a wasteland. The reason, some of them argue, is that it is a 'passive' medium. The consumer has little control over what he or she consumes beyond the crude ability to zap between channels. To overcome the problem, champions of interactivity, such

'A speaking wizard provides guidance, making the system easy to use, especially for anyone over the age of fifteen (anyone younger will have played sufficient SuperNintendos to know how to control the system unaided)'

as Nicholas Negroponte, founder of MIT's Media Lab, want to make 'Prime Time' 'My Time': we will make up the television programmes we want from a variety of sources accessed via cable and telephone networks, much as we might cook the meal we want from a variety of raw ingredients available from supermarkets.

CD-I is a standard; all CD-I CDs will play in all CD-I-compatible players, and the standard is being backed by an awesome consortium of media and electronics companies including Sony, Time Warner and Bertelsmann (the German publishing group).

The author's death is surely much exaggerated. The avant-garde from dadaist to neo-modernist has toyed with narrative conventions by constructing ambiguous artefacts that frustrate any attempt to impose a unified meaning or hierarchical structure. But as any writer knows, the story counts for everything. That is what, with honest toil, authors can attempt to provide. CD-I versions of Kipling's *Just So* stories demonstrate the point perfectly: they are so well narrated (by Jack Nicholson), so well illustrated (by Tim Raglin), but above all such good stories that the idea of interrupting them to play a game or read Kipling's biography – the much-vaunted benefit of interactivity – seems ridiculous.

When you 'play' a CD-I disc, what you will usually see on the television screen is a sort of pictorial menu of options. These are activated using a pointer that is moved around the screen under the control of the remote-control joystick. For example, in the interactive version of Kipling's *Just So* story 'How the Rhinoceros got his Skin', you can interrupt the story and choose to play a game, skip to another part of the story, or read background material. A speaking wizard, generic to all the CD-I children's stories, provides guidance, making the system easy to use, especially for anyone over the age of fifteen (anyone younger will have played sufficient SuperNintendos to know how to control the system unaided).

CD-I is an important test for the idea of interactivity. Philips has implemented the technology well. Some of the 'software' (i.e. the CD-I discs) is well produced. But do we really want to be producers as well as consumers? I remember the days when they used to make our entertainment.

PROFESSOR POTEMKIN'S COMPETITION

The correct answers to the July competition were: 1. 'Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown'; 2. Zbigniew Cybulski; 3. 'The Devil is a Woman'; 4. Alex Cox; 5. Viridiana; 6. Sophia Loren; 7. Budd Boetticher; 8. 'El Amor Brujo' ('A Love Bewitched'); 9. Barcelona; 10. Orson Welles. The first name out of the hat was Lesley Campy of Rotherham.

This month's competition, 'Eroica', deals with legendary heroes and classical mythology on screen. Answers by

15 September, please, to Professor Potemkin, Sight and Sound, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Five winners will each receive a box set of Andrei Tarkovsky videos (including 'The Sacrifice', 'Andrei Rublev', 'Mirror' and 'Nostalgia') released by Artificial Eye Video and available to buy at £15.99 each, plus a copy of 'The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky' by Mark Le Fanu.

1. Who played Batman when the caped crusader last appeared on the big screen with Robin?

2. Which dragon-slayer did Paul Richter play for Fritz Lang in 1924?

3. Who, under the name of Arnold Strong, began his screen career as 'Hercules in New York'?

4. Everyone knows that Superman and Clark Kent are one and the same; but what was Helen Slater's human alias in 'Supergirl'?

5. Some actors only play villains. Who fought both 'Sinbad' (Douglas Fairbanks Jr) and 'Ulysses' (Kirk Douglas)?

6. In which two closely related film

classics did Takashi Shimura and Yul Brynner each lead a half-a-dozen heroes into legend?

7. Maria Callas made her only screen appearance as a mythological heroine. Who?

8. Two famous French directors made Arthurian art movies in the 70s. Name their films.

9. Who, of all of the many Hollywood Robin Hoods, was the only one with the wits to write his own material?

10. If Bo Derek is Jane, who is Tarzan?

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Culture and Cinema Five Hundred Years After Columbus
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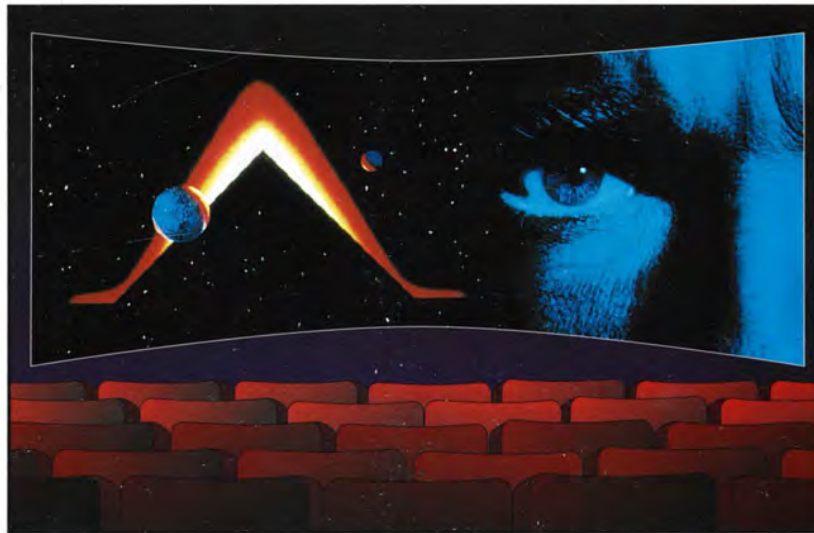
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